

S.F. No. 1401 – Service-Learning Integration into Minnesota’s Education System

Author: Senator Bonnie S. Westlin

Prepared by: Betsy Hjelseth, Legislative Analyst (651/296-7983)

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Section 1. **Service-learning specialist; service-learning work.** Requires the commissioner to create a service-learning specialist position within the department. The specialist will expand evidence-based service-learning, coordinate service-learning grants under section 124D.501, and provide technical assistance.

Section 2. **[124D.501] Innovative Incubator Service-Learning Grants.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** Defines “eligible school” as a school district or school site operated by a school district, charter school, Tribal contract or grant school, or cooperative unit. Defines “eligible service-learning partnership” as a partnership that includes an eligible school and at least one community-based organization, community education program, state or federal agency, or political subdivision and may include other individuals or entities.

Subdivision 2. **Establishment; eligibility criteria; application requirements.** (a) Establishes a five-year technical assistance and grant program to initiate or expand and strengthen innovative service-learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade 12, help close the academic achievement gap, and create a positive school climate.

(b) Requires at least one program staff member and at least one service-learning specialist who is designated to develop and share expertise in implementing service-learning best practices to work with students to form a student-adult partnership. Requires a participating student to work with at least one adult from the initial partnership to identify a need or opportunity to pursue through a service-learning partnership before developing and submitting a grant application to the department. States that the fiscal agent for the grant to an eligible service-learning partnership is an eligible school who is a member or has a program that is a member of the partnership.

(c) Requires an eligible service-learning partnership that receives an innovation service-learning grant to include at least two or more enrolled students; two or more school

employees of an eligible school; and an eligible community-based organization, community education program, state or federal agency, or political subdivision. Requires an eligible service-learning partnership that receives an innovation service-learning grant to assist students in actively participating in service-learning experiences that meet needs; operate collaboratively with service-learning partnership members; align service-learning experiences with at least one state or local academic standard; apply students' knowledge and skills in their community; foster students' civic engagement; and explore or pursue career pathways and support career and college readiness.

(d) Requires an eligible service-learning partnership to apply to the commissioner of education in the form and manner determined by the commissioner. Requires the eligible service-learning partnership plan to include various components.

Subdivision 3. **Innovation grants.** Requires the commissioner to annually award up to 32 grants of up to \$50,000 each that are equitably distributed throughout Minnesota by congressional district. Allows the commissioner to designate start-up or leader grant categories with differentiated maximum grant dollar amounts up to \$50,000. Requires a partnership to provide a 50 percent match in funds or in-kind contributions to receive a grant unless the commissioner waives the match requirement for an applicant serving a high number of students whose families meet federal poverty guidelines.

Subdivision 4. **Evaluation.** Requires the commissioner to evaluate awarded grants based on the educational and developmental outcomes of participating students and the eligible school's progress toward meeting at least one goal of the world's best workforce goals or the state plan submitted and approved under the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Requires the commissioner to submit a report on participating student and community outcomes to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education by February 15, 2030.

Effective Date. Makes the section effective July 1, 2023.

Section 3. **Appropriation.**

Subdivision 2. Appropriates \$300,000 in fiscal years 2024 and 2025 from the general fund to the department for the service-learning specialist position and related-service learning work under section 124D.501. Sets a base of \$300,000 for fiscal year 2026 and later.

Subdivision 3. Appropriates \$1,000,000 in fiscal years 2024 and 2025 from the general fund to the department for innovative-service learning grants under section 124D.501. Sets a base of \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2026 and later.