

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 1704

SPONSOR: Senator Cowin

SUBJECT: Professional Teaching Fellowship Act

DATE: March 23, 1999                      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>White</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>FP</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## I. Summary:

This bill creates a two-part program called the Professional Teaching Fellowship Program. The first part of the program is called the Student Fellowship Program and recruits highly qualified candidates to become teachers, then provides academic enrichment and fellowships in the form of forgivable loans during their last 2 years of college. The second part is called the Teaching Fellowship Program and provides sequentially advanced, year-round professional development activities to teachers in their first 3 years in the classroom. At the end of the program, the fellows are to be eligible for a master's degree. The bill establishes a not-for-profit organization in the Executive Office of the Governor to implement the program.

The bill creates five new sections of the Florida Statutes, as yet undesignated.

## II. Present Situation:

Florida has a number of scholarships and forgivable loans to encourage people to enter the teaching profession. The following table is a summary of 1997-1998:

Program/Statute	Students Awarded	Funds Disbursed
Critical Teacher Shortage Programs		
Loan Forgiveness (s. 240.4063, F.S.)	1,168	\$3,243,879
Tuition Reimbursement (s. 240.4064, F.S.)	1,222	\$539,030
Exceptional Student Education Training Grant (s.240.405, F.S.)	300	\$109,019
Florida Fund for Minority Teachers (s. 240.4129, F.S.)	704	\$2,643,452
Florida Teachers - Chappie James (s. 240.4064, F.S.)	416	\$606,750
Florida Teachers - Forgivable Loan (s. 240.4064, F.S.)	226	\$971,779

TOTAL	4,036	\$8,113,909
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None of these programs is designed to recruit the highest achieving students into the teaching profession, but to assist regular students into a particular certification area or to correct under-representation of teachers with certain demographic characteristics.

Research on the effect of teacher preparation on student achievement shows the highest correlation with teachers who have taken and excelled in advanced level courses in the class content area. Advanced courses and high achievement have a measurable impact on the ways teachers manage the classroom and the achievement of their students as measured by scores on tests.<sup>1</sup> No other measure correlates so highly -- the number of courses taken is less important than whether they were advanced.

On any scale of quality, master teachers are experienced teachers. Retention data show that the likelihood of a teacher's remaining in the profession increases dramatically after the first three years. The early years of teaching are difficult for even the most talented professionals, and countries with the highest student achievement are consistently found to use support systems for new teachers and opportunities for collaboration among teachers throughout their careers.

Florida does not have a statewide program to provide peer support to teachers in their first few years in the classroom.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The legislation under consideration will create a two-part program called the Professional Teaching Fellowship to coordinate a network of activities to identify and recruit excellent candidates to become new teachers, to support them through an enriched teacher preparation program, and to provide professional development support with three tiers of required activities throughout the first 3 years of teaching.

#### Section 1. Name, Intent

Names the program and its two components, the Student Fellowship Program and the Teaching Fellowship program. It states an intent to demonstrate the need for and benefits of providing intensive programs of professional development for new teachers.

#### Section 2. Student Fellowship Program; Recruitment

Creates the recruitment component of the Student Fellowship Program. Its purpose is to identify postsecondary education institutions and fellowship candidates to implement the program. The recruitment will be coordinated by the Florida Institute for Teachers, which is created in section 5 of the bill.

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see: Chaney, B. 1995. *Student Outcomes and the Professional Preparation of Eighth Grade Teachers in Science and Mathematics* and Carlsen, W.S.1991 *The Construction of Subject Matter Knowledge in Primary Science Teaching*.

The fellowship candidates are to be selected by their demonstrated excellence in a liberal arts program according to criteria established by the institute. The standards must include at least grade point average, recommendations from professors, and extracurricular activities.

Regional review committees will be formed to assist in the recruitment of both students and colleges. The bill suggests that recruitment should concentrate on areas identified through research as most in need of excellent teachers and on correcting imbalances in the ratio of teachers to students. Currently, the ratio of minority teachers to minority students, especially African American, is out of balance.

The program requires an informational or promotional effort.

Candidates selected must be rising juniors who are Florida citizens enrolled in a public or private college or university in Florida. Students at independent colleges will be eligible only if the college is eligible for the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant, s. 240.605, F.S. These colleges must be baccalaureate-degree level, not-for-profit, accredited by SACS, and located in and chartered by Florida.

The bill suggests that fellows do not need to enroll in a college of education, but may concentrate their education on a liberal arts content area. Participating colleges must assure cooperation among liberal arts programs and education programs to benefit the fellows.

The fellowship award is \$6,500 annually, with a requirement to teach in a Florida public school for 1 year for every year the fellowship was received. In addition, the fellow must agree to participate in a 12 month program during the college years. That program is described in section 3 of the bill.

### **Section 3. Student Fellowship Program; Postsecondary Education**

Creates requirements for the postsecondary education of fellowship recipients. The Florida Institute for Teachers will obtain participation by school districts that wish to employ the fellows and will organize experiential activities for them in schools during their last two years of college. These experiences will include working with a master teacher and with school children.

This section also requires fellows to maintain satisfactory progress to keep the fellowship and to agree to teach for 2 years in a Florida public school after graduation. The student has 5 years after graduation to fulfill the teaching requirement, otherwise he or she must repay the total amount of the award plus annual interest of 8 percent. The bill contains standard requirements for the agreement and the repayment, including the requirement of a promissory note.

### **Section 4. Teaching Fellowship Program**

Creates the Teaching Fellowship Program, a concentrated, sequential professional development program for teachers in the first 3 years of teaching. A teacher who completes the program is eligible for a master's degree.

All recipients of a Student Fellowship are eligible, and the Florida Institute for teachers may select others to participate if funds are available. The bill does not require a recipient to have completed requirements for a teaching certificate but allows the institute to work with employing school

districts to create conditions for employment. This provision is an encouragement to bring into the teaching profession people who excel in a content area in college, but have not earned the required education credits. Both student fellows and teaching fellows must meet the same rigorous selection criteria.

The institute will work with the employing school districts to assure that the activities are provided as required and that a college or university participates to assure that the program confers credit toward a master's degree.

The program provides for a master teacher to work as a mentor with the teaching fellows and a group of 12 to 15 school children. The institute will establish criteria by which master teachers may be selected. Suggestions include national certification, selection as teacher of the year, or evidence of superior gains in achievement of students in the teacher's classroom.

The program requires teaching fellows and their mentors to work under a 12-month, full-time contract. The cohort of school children must agree, with the support of their parents, to attend school for 210 days per year. Each year of the program is one of three tiers, and the teaching fellow receives a bonus of \$500 after completing each tier.

In the first tier, the mentor and the teaching fellow receive orientation at an academy or center selected by the institute. During the summer, they work with the students on preparing individualized education plans for each of the students. Other activities or research may be required so that the fellow earns at least 6 credit hours toward a master's degree. During the first school year, a teaching fellow's assignment to a classroom must allow significant involvement of the master teacher or other teaching fellows. The school system must allow for at least 1 hour of daily consultation. Because both the mentor and the fellow work full-time, this planning period does not necessarily disrupt the classroom schedule.

In the second tier, the mentor and teaching fellow continue research and progress toward a master's degree, with a concentration on evaluating student progress and adapting teaching methods based on the results. If possible, the same cohort of students is involved during the second year. In the second school year, the teacher may be assigned additional classroom duties.

In the third tier, the program concentrates on development of curricula, technology, and assessment. In the school year of the third tier, the teaching fellow provides specialized assistance with technology and curriculum development, and may become a mentor to teaching fellows in their first or second year.

Upon completion of the program, a new teacher is eligible for a master's degree, a position as a master teacher, and a contract with the school district at a stipend authorized for a teacher with a master's degree.

### **Section 5. Florida Institute for Teachers**

Creates the Florida Institute for Teachers, a not-for-profit statutory corporation assigned for administrative purposes to the Executive Office of the Governor. Its board of directors includes 11 non-legislative members:

- Three Governor's appointees;

- Three Senate appointees;
- Three House of Representatives appointees;
- The Lieutenant Governor or designee; and
- The Commissioner of Education or designee.

The institute's duties are enumerated in sections 1-4 of the bill. This section gives the additional responsibilities to:

- Administer the forgivable loan program in cooperation with the Office of Student Financial Assistance of the Department of Education, and
- Evaluate the success of the Professional Teaching Fellowship Act. The evaluation must include following up on the recipients to report their success in teaching, including the achievement gains of students in their classes.

**Section 6. Effective date of July 1, 1999.**

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The student fellows will be eligible for an annual award of \$6,500, which must be repaid with interest if a recipient leaves the program or fails to teach in a Florida public school 1 year for every year the award was received.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The program depends on an appropriation for the Florida Institute for Teachers, annual awards of \$6,500 per recipient, and annual bonuses of \$500 for the Teaching Fellowships.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

The recruitment component and Student Fellowship component of the program are similar to a successful program implemented in North Carolina since 1986. That program is called the Excellent Teaching Program and is coordinated by the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission. It has demonstrated an ability to attract and retain teachers with higher academic credentials than would have resulted without the program.

**VIII. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.

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