

By Senator Cowin

11-432A-99

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; providing an
3 intent to demonstrate benefits of a program to
4 prepare new teachers and to provide certain
5 professional development activities to support
6 them; providing for recruitment of persons to
7 participate in a fellowship program by means of
8 forgivable loans; providing standards and
9 conditions for eligibility for the program;
10 assigning responsibility for recruitment;
11 requiring regional review committees; providing
12 for selection of certain postsecondary
13 education institutions to participate in the
14 program; providing standards and conditions for
15 receipt and forgiveness of a loan; providing
16 conditions for repayment of loans not eligible
17 for loan forgiveness; authorizing conditions
18 for deferment of repayment; providing for a
19 revolving fund; establishing a professional
20 development program for recipients of a
21 fellowship and other college graduates;
22 providing standards for recruitment of
23 participating teachers, school districts, and
24 postgraduate programs; requiring certain
25 conditions of employment of participants;
26 establishing tiers of sequential professional
27 development activities; creating a
28 not-for-profit organization to be
29 administratively assigned to the Executive
30 Office of the Governor; providing for
31 appointment of members of its board of

1 directors; authorizing the employment of staff;
2 providing its duties and responsibilities;
3 providing for cooperation with an office of the
4 Department of Education; providing an effective
5 date.

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7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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9 Section 1. Professional Teaching Fellowship Act; short
10 title; intent.--

11 (1) This act may be cited as the "Professional
12 Teaching Fellowship Act," which provides for the Student
13 Fellowship Program and the Teaching Fellowship Program.

14 (2) The Legislature intends to demonstrate the need
15 for and benefits of providing intensive programs of
16 professional development for new teachers. New teachers need
17 expertise in the content areas in which they teach, and they
18 need skill in their ability to impart that content. A teacher
19 attains mastery of both endeavors through simultaneous study
20 of the liberal arts combined with work with school children
21 and master teachers in a planned, sequential program of
22 increasing concentration on student achievement. Therefore,
23 the Professional Teaching Fellowship Act is created to
24 coordinate the network needed to identify and recruit
25 excellent candidates to become new teachers, to support them
26 through an enriched teacher preparation program, and to
27 implement a program to provide professional development
28 support which has three tiers of intensive involvement
29 throughout the first 3 years of teaching experience.

30 Section 2. Student Fellowship Program;
31 recruitment.--The purpose of the recruitment component of the

1 Student Fellowship Program is to identify the postsecondary
2 education institutions and fellowship candidates that will
3 implement the forgivable loan program created in section 3 of
4 this act.

5 (1) A fellowship candidate must be a citizen and a
6 resident of this state who is a rising junior enrolled in a
7 state community college, a state university, or an independent
8 postsecondary education institution that is eligible for the
9 Florida Resident Access Grant. Upon selection, a student
10 fellow receives an annual loan of \$6,500 with which to enroll
11 during the junior and senior years of college in a
12 participating postsecondary education institution. The loan
13 will be forgiven if the student fellow graduates and, during
14 the 5 years following graduation, teaches in a public school
15 in this state for at least 2 years.

16 (2) The Florida Institute for Teachers shall identify
17 the postsecondary education institutions that are willing and
18 able to conduct the educational and professional development
19 activities required to implement the program. The board of
20 directors of the institute shall assure that participating
21 colleges of education agree to work with colleges of liberal
22 arts so as to attract candidates to the program who possess
23 the highest qualifications in a content area speciality.

24 (3) The institute shall develop standards and
25 guidelines for selecting candidates for the Student Fellowship
26 Program. The guidelines must require a minimum grade point
27 average, recommendations from liberal arts professors, and
28 extracurricular activities that will be pursued by a
29 candidate.

30 (4) The institute shall form regional review
31 committees to assist it in assuring the participation of the

1 postsecondary education institutions that are best equipped to
2 implement the program and to recruit the best students.
3 Recruitment efforts should concentrate on areas identified
4 through research as most in need of excellent teachers,
5 including areas where there is a critical teacher shortage,
6 and on teachers having demographic characteristics that will
7 correct an imbalance in the ratio of teachers compared to
8 students enrolled in public schools.

9 (5) The regional review committees shall plan and
10 implement activities designed to inform students concerning
11 the benefits of the program and to assist postsecondary
12 education institutions in carrying out the required
13 activities.

14 (6) A candidate for a student fellowship must agree to
15 enroll in a participating postsecondary education institution
16 and to participate in a 12-month program during the junior and
17 senior years of college.

18 Section 3. Student Fellowship Program; postsecondary
19 education component.--The Florida Institute for Teachers shall
20 administer the Student Fellowship Program.

21 (1) The program shall provide a 2-year scholarship
22 loan of \$6,500 per year to citizens who are residents of this
23 state, who are rising juniors at a state community college,
24 state university, or independent postsecondary education
25 institution, and who are eligible to participate in the
26 Florida Resident Access Grant.

27 (2) The institute shall administer the program in
28 cooperation with postsecondary education institutions selected
29 by the institute.

30 (a) A student fellowship recipient shall participate
31 in a 12-month program developed by the participating

1 postsecondary education institution in consultation with the
2 Florida Institute for Teachers.

3 (b) The program requires the participation of the
4 recipient's college of liberal arts and of the school district
5 that wishes to employ the fellow upon graduation. The
6 recipient must receive an intensive preparation in a content
7 area combined with ongoing experience with school children
8 through internships or working with a master teacher
9 identified as a mentor.

10 (3) To continue to receive a fellowship, a student
11 fellow must maintain satisfactory progress toward a
12 baccalaureate degree at a participating postsecondary
13 institution. The institute shall set standards for
14 satisfactory progress, which must exceed the standards
15 required of other students majoring in education and which may
16 include extracurricular activities related to the program or a
17 participating school district.

18 (4) A recipient may receive a fellowship loan for 2
19 years. The institute shall forgive the fellowship loan if,
20 within 5 years after graduation, the recipient teaches 2 years
21 at a public school in this state. The institute shall also
22 forgive a loan if it finds that the recipient cannot teach for
23 2 years because of the death or permanent disability of the
24 recipient.

25 (5) If a Student Fellowship Program recipient does not
26 graduate within 2 years, or if the recipient graduates but,
27 within the first 5 years after graduation, does not accept
28 employment as a teacher in a public school in this state, the
29 fellowship recipient must repay the total amount awarded plus
30 annual interest of 8 percent.

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1 (a) Interest begins accruing the first day of the 13th
2 month after the fourth anniversary of the month in which the
3 recipient receives a baccalaureate degree or after the month
4 in which enrollment as a full-time student is terminated.
5 Interest does not accrue during any period of deferment or
6 eligible teaching service.

7 (b) The repayment period begins the first day of the
8 13th month after the month in which the fourth anniversary of
9 college graduation occurs or after the month in which
10 enrollment as a full-time student is terminated.

11 (c) The terms and conditions of the fellowship
12 repayment must be contained in both a promissory note and a
13 repayment schedule. The loan must be paid within 10 years
14 after the date of graduation or termination of full-time
15 enrollment, including any periods of deferment. A shorter
16 repayment period may be granted. The minimum monthly repayment
17 is \$50 or the unpaid balance, unless otherwise approved,
18 except that the monthly payment may not be less than the
19 accruing interest. The recipient may prepay all or any part of
20 the scholarship without penalty.

21 (d) The holder of the promissory note may grant a
22 deferment of repayment for a recipient who is unable to secure
23 a teaching position that would qualify as repayment, who
24 becomes disabled, or who experiences other hardships. Such a
25 deferment may be granted for a total of 24 months and may not
26 exceed 12 consecutive months.

27 (6) All funds appropriated to or otherwise received by
28 the Student Fellowship Program for scholarships, all funds
29 received as repayment of scholarship loans, and all interest
30 earned on these funds shall be placed in a revolving fund
31 within the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund.

1 Notwithstanding the provisions of section 216.301, Florida
2 Statutes, and pursuant to section 216.351, Florida Statutes,
3 any balance in the fund at the end of any fiscal year that has
4 been allocated to the Student Fellowship Program must remain
5 in the fund and will be available for carrying out the
6 purposes of this section. With the prior approval of the
7 Legislature in the General Appropriations Act, the revolving
8 fund may also be used for campus and summer program support
9 and costs related to disbursement of awards and the collection
10 of loan repayments.

11 Section 4. Teaching Fellowship Program.--

12 (1) The Teaching Fellowship Program is a concentrated,
13 sequential professional development program provided to a
14 teacher under an annual contract during the first 3 years of
15 teaching. The program is available to all recipients of the
16 student fellowship created in section 3 of this act, and to
17 others selected by the Florida Institute for Teachers, if
18 funds are available. The institute shall establish selection
19 criteria at least as rigorous as the criteria for selecting
20 the student fellowship recipients. A graduate may be selected
21 whether or not he or she has completed college coursework
22 required to be eligible for certification to teach in Florida,
23 if a school district is willing to employ him or her as a
24 teacher under conditions arranged by the institute.

25 (2) The Florida Institute for Teachers shall assist
26 participating school districts in coordinating the activities
27 required to conduct the program. The institute shall also
28 select and work with institutions providing postgraduate
29 programs to assure that the program confers credit toward a
30 master's degree and to describe conditions under which a

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1 participant may earn a master's degree as a result of
2 participation.

3 (3) The program requires a school district to:

4 (a) Employ the teaching fellow under a 12-month,
5 full-time contract.

6 (b) Identify and provide a salary bonus or additional
7 stipend to a master teacher to work under a 12-month contract
8 as a mentor to the new teacher. The master teacher must be
9 selected based upon criteria adopted by the Florida Institute
10 for Teachers, such as certification at the national level,
11 selection as teacher of the year, or evidence of superior
12 gains in achievement by students in the teacher's classes.

13 (c) Provide to the teaching fellow and his or her
14 mentor a common planning period during the school year, or
15 make other arrangements to enable daily consultation.

16 (d) Plan an intensive professional development program
17 in three tiers as required in this section.

18 (e) Identify and recruit a cohort of students who,
19 with the support of their parents, are willing to participate
20 in the program for 210 days per year. If possible, the same
21 cohort of 12 to 15 students shall work with the same teaching
22 fellow during all three tiers of the program.

23 (4) After each tier, the teaching fellow will receive
24 a bonus of \$500, to be provided by the Florida Institute for
25 Teachers, in addition to the stipend provided by the school
26 district.

27 (5) The professional development program for the
28 teaching fellows must be provided in the following tiers:

29 (a) In the first tier, the teaching fellow and the
30 master teacher assigned to work as a mentor shall receive
31 orientation and professional development that are planned and

1 provided by a teacher education center or academy selected by
2 the Florida Institute for Teachers.

3 1. During the summer of the first tier, the teaching
4 fellow and master teacher shall work with from 12 to 15
5 students recruited by the school district for the program.
6 This work must include preparing an individualized education
7 plan for each student. The teaching fellow may be required to
8 conduct other educational or research activities necessary to
9 earn at least 6 credit hours toward a master's degree.

10 2. During the school year in the first tier, the
11 teaching fellow may be assigned primary responsibility for a
12 classroom, with significant involvement by the mentor teacher
13 or other program participants who have 2 years or more of
14 experience in the program. Provision must be made for at least
15 1 hour of daily consultation between the teacher and mentor.
16 The focus of the professional development must be on effective
17 methods of teaching the subject matter in which the fellow has
18 majored. Student achievement as demonstrated by assessment
19 instruments, portfolios, or other measures must be used to
20 assist the teaching fellow to evaluate his or her progress.

21 (b) During the second tier of the program, the
22 teaching fellow shall continue the education and research
23 required for progress toward a master's degree and shall
24 continue to work with a cohort of students, including as many
25 of the same students as in tier one as is possible.

26 1. During the summer of the second tier, in addition
27 to the professional development activities planned for
28 postgraduate credit, the teacher shall become the lead teacher
29 for the cohort of students and shall begin to act as a mentor
30 for a teacher who is in the program for the first summer. The
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1 program must concentrate upon evaluating student progress and
2 adapting teaching methods based upon the results.

3 2. During the school year of the second tier, the
4 teacher may be assigned additional responsibilities for
5 classroom instruction while continuing to consult with a
6 mentoring teacher and to work as a mentor to the students in
7 the cohort.

8 (c) During the third tier, the teaching fellow shall
9 continue professional development activities planned to earn
10 postgraduate credit and continue to work with a master teacher
11 and students.

12 1. During the summer of the third tier, the teacher
13 shall work with increased concentration on development of
14 curricula, use of technology in instruction, and student
15 assessment and evaluation, including the ability to interpret
16 student performance and adapt varying teaching methods based
17 upon that interpretation.

18 2. During the school year of the third tier, the
19 teacher may be assigned responsibility for classroom
20 management, which may include specialized assistance with
21 classroom technology and curriculum development, and may also
22 provide assistance as a mentor to teaching fellows in their
23 first or second year in the program.

24 (6) Upon completion of the program, a new teacher is
25 eligible for:

26 (a) A master's degree in the subject matter provided
27 through the agreement with a postgraduate program, or a
28 certificate that guarantees substantial credit toward a
29 master's degree;

30 (b) A position as a master teacher in the Teaching
31 Fellowship Program; and

1 (c) A continuing contract with the participating
2 school district, with a stipend as provided for a teacher with
3 a master's degree.

4 Section 5. Florida Institute for Teachers.--

5 (1) The Florida Institute for Teachers is created as a
6 not-for-profit statutory corporation assigned for
7 administrative purposes to the Executive Office of the
8 Governor. The institute shall plan, organize, administer, and
9 manage the programs required by the Professional Teaching
10 Fellowship Act.

11 (2) A board of directors shall administer the
12 institute. The board consists of 11 nonlegislative members as
13 follows:

14 (a) Three persons appointed by the Governor;

15 (b) Three persons appointed by the President of the
16 Senate;

17 (c) Three persons appointed by the Speaker of the
18 House of Representatives;

19 (d) The Lieutenant Governor or his or her designee;
20 and

21 (e) The Commissioner of Education or his or her
22 designee.

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24 The Lieutenant Governor or his or her designee shall serve as
25 chairperson. The appointed members shall serve terms of 4
26 years, except that three of the initial members shall serve
27 2-year terms and three shall serve 3-year terms. Those
28 responsible for appointments shall select members who have
29 demonstrated a commitment to education. A member may be
30 reappointed. A vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of
31 the term. Members of the board are entitled to reimbursement

1 for travel and per diem expenses, as provided in section
2 112.061, Florida Statutes.

3 (3) The board shall:

4 (a) Hold meetings as needed to administer this act.

5 (b) Adopt rules for its own government.

6 (c) Appoint an executive director to serve at its
7 pleasure. The executive director shall be the chief
8 administrative officer and agent of the board and may employ
9 staff as authorized by the board.

10 (d) Maintain a record of its proceedings.

11 (e) Plan and implement the Student Fellowship Program
12 and the Teaching Fellowship Program as provided in sections 1
13 through 4 of this act.

14 (f) In cooperation with the Office of Student
15 Financial Assistance of the Department of Education,
16 administer the forgivable loan provisions of the Student
17 Fellowship Program.

18 (g) Evaluate the success of the Professional Teaching
19 Fellowship Act. The evaluation must include following up on
20 the fellowship recipients to develop a report of their success
21 in teaching. The measures of success must include the number
22 who remain teaching in Florida, the number of loans forgiven
23 and repaid, the number who attain the status of master
24 teacher, and the achievement gains of students in the
25 classrooms assigned to the teaching fellows and master
26 teachers. The student achievement gains must be compared to
27 the gains of students having similar demographic
28 characteristics in classrooms of teachers who did not receive
29 a teaching fellowship.

30 Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Creates the "Professional Teaching Fellowship Act."
Provides fellowships to prepare new teachers and promote
professional development activities. (See bill for
details.)