

By Representative Atwater

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to teacher recruitment;
3 creating the Transition to Teaching Program;
4 encouraging participation by postsecondary
5 education institutions and organizations that
6 represent eligible employees or employ eligible
7 applicants; providing for grant proposals and
8 applications; requiring an evaluation;
9 authorizing certain activities and placing
10 limitations on expenditures; providing for
11 repayment of certain stipends; providing an
12 effective date.

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14 WHEREAS, Florida's public school enrollment has
15 increased by over 200,000 students in the past 5 years, and

16 WHEREAS, Florida's supply of teachers for these
17 students is inadequate, with over 15,000 vacancies expected in
18 2001-2002, and

19 WHEREAS, the successful Troops to Teachers Program has
20 recruited over 3,000 retired service men and women into
21 teaching careers, over 200 in Florida, and

22 WHEREAS, on December 15, 2000, Representative Jim Davis
23 and Senator Bob Graham secured a federal appropriation of \$34
24 million for a program, modeled after Troops to Teachers, for
25 career changing professionals to enter the teaching field,
26 NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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30 Section 1. Transition to Teaching Program; legislative
31 intent.--The Transition to Teaching Program is created to

1 encourage and assist midcareer professionals who want to
2 become teachers. It is intended to enable professional
3 associations, business and trade groups, unions, school
4 districts, postsecondary education institutions, community
5 organizations, and other organizations to assist their
6 retiring employees who want to become teachers.

7 Section 2. Grants; eligible applicants.--

8 (1) A community college, state university, or
9 independent college or university is eligible for a grant to
10 implement the Transition to Teaching Program by working with
11 firms that employ professionals or represent employees. A
12 consortium of organizations is eligible, but it must include a
13 postsecondary education institution. The Commissioner of
14 Education shall design the process for receiving and
15 evaluating grant proposals in accordance with state and
16 federal appropriations guidelines. Grants may be awarded only
17 to the extent that funding is provided.

18 (2) The Commissioner of Education shall request
19 proposals from eligible applicants to participate in the
20 program. Each application must:

21 (a) Describe the target group of career changing
22 professionals upon which the applicant will focus in carrying
23 out its program, including a description of the
24 characteristics of the target group that shows how the
25 knowledge and experience of its members are likely to improve
26 their ability to become effective teachers.

27 (b) Describe how the applicant will identify and
28 recruit program participants.

29 (c) Describe how the applicant will ensure that
30 program participants are placed and teach in eligible school
31 districts in this state.

1 (d) Describe the teacher support services that program
2 participants will receive throughout at least their first year
3 of teaching.

4 (e) Describe how the applicant will collaborate with
5 other institutions, agencies, or organizations to recruit,
6 train, place, and support program participants, including
7 evidence of the commitment of those institutions, agencies, or
8 organizations to the applicant's program.

9 (3) The Commissioner of Education must require an
10 evaluation process to measure the progress and effectiveness
11 of the program. This evaluation must include:

12 (a) The program's goals and objectives.

13 (b) The performance indicators that the applicant will
14 use to measure the program's progress.

15 (c) The outcome measures that will be used to
16 determine the program's effectiveness.

17 (d) An assurance that the applicant will provide the
18 commissioner with information the commissioner finds necessary
19 to determine the overall effectiveness of the programs.

20 Section 3. Program implementation; authorized
21 expenditures.--

22 (1) An applicant shall estimate the funds required for
23 the proposed program. All funds provided for a program must be
24 used to provide training stipends and other financial
25 incentives for program participants, in an amount not to
26 exceed \$5,000 per participant.

27 (2) Eligible applicants are encouraged to implement
28 the program using the following components:

29 (a) Recruiting program participants, including
30 informing them of opportunities under the program and putting
31 them in contact with other institutions, agencies, or

1 organizations that will train, place, and support them in the
2 teaching profession.

3 (b) Assisting higher education institutions or other
4 providers of teacher training to tailor their training to meet
5 the particular needs of professionals who are changing their
6 careers to teaching.

7 (c) Placement activities, including identifying
8 eligible local education agencies with a need for the skills
9 and characteristics of the newly trained program participants
10 and assisting those participants to obtain employment in those
11 school districts.

12 (d) Postplacement support activities for program
13 participants.

14 Section 4. Eligible participants; requirements for
15 grant repayment.--

16 (1) Each participant who receives a grant from the
17 program to pursue a teacher preparation program must agree to
18 teach in an eligible school district in this state for at
19 least 3 years after certification. To be eligible, a school
20 district must meet the requirements established in regulations
21 that implement the Omnibus Appropriations Bill of 2000.

22 (2) The Commissioner of Education shall establish
23 conditions under which a participant must repay all or a
24 portion of the training stipend if the participant fails to
25 complete his or her service obligation.

26 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.
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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Creates the Transition to Teaching Program. Encourages participation by postsecondary education institutions and organizations that represent eligible employees or employ eligible applicants. Provides for grant proposals and applications. Requires an evaluation. Authorizes certain activities and places limitations on expenditures. Provides for the repayment of certain stipends awarded to participants who do not complete their obligations under the program.