

By Senator Miller

21-299-01

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Transition to Teaching
3 Pilot Program; creating the Transition to
4 Teaching Pilot Program with the intent of
5 addressing the need of high-poverty school
6 districts for teachers; defining terms;
7 providing procedures for applying to
8 participate in the program; providing for the
9 award of stipends; requiring the Commissioner
10 of Education to distribute awards equitably;
11 requiring a program participant to serve in a
12 high-poverty school district for 3 years;
13 requiring the commissioner to establish
14 requirements to ensure that eligible program
15 participants fulfill their service obligation
16 or repay any stipend or financial incentive
17 received; providing funding for the award of
18 stipends; providing for program evaluation;
19 authorizing the adoption of rules; providing an
20 effective date.

21
22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
23

24 Section 1. Transition to Teaching Pilot Program.--
25 (1) CREATION; PURPOSE.--There is created the
26 Transition to Teaching Pilot Program to address the need of
27 high-poverty school districts for highly qualified teachers in
28 specific subject areas, such as mathematics, science, foreign
29 languages, bilingual education, English, career education,
30 computer literacy, and special education, by facilitating the
31 recruitment, preparation, and placement of professionals

1 interested in changing careers and who have knowledge and
2 experience that will help them become such teachers.

3 (2) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

4 (a) "High-poverty school district" means a school
5 district in which the percentage of children ages 5 through 17
6 from families below the poverty level is 20 percent or
7 greater, or in which the number of such children exceeds
8 10,000.

9 (b) "Eligible program participant" means a
10 professional who:

11 1. Holds at least a baccalaureate degree but is not
12 certified to teach in a high-need subject area, or who will
13 earn a teaching certificate upon completing a maximum of 15
14 college credit hours.

15 2. Demonstrates interest in, and commitment to,
16 becoming a teacher.

17 3. Has knowledge and experience relevant to teaching a
18 high-need subject area in a high-poverty school district.

19 4. Has a commitment for hire, in writing, from a
20 school district.

21 (3) APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE; AWARD OF

22 STIPENDS.--Each eligible program participant who wishes to
23 participate in the Transition to Teaching Pilot Program shall
24 submit an application to the Commissioner of Education
25 containing such information as the commissioner requires.

26 During the 2001-2002 fiscal year, the commissioner may award
27 up to 2,700 stipends of \$5,000 each to be used by the program
28 participant for training necessary to become certified to
29 teach in a high-need subject area. To the extent practicable,
30 the commissioner shall distribute stipends awarded according

31

1 to this section equitably among the different geographic
2 regions of the state.

3 (4) SERVICE OBLIGATION; REPAYMENT.--Each eligible
4 program participant must agree, in writing, to serve in a
5 high-poverty school district for at least 3 years and to
6 become fully certified within 2 years after employment. The
7 commissioner shall establish such requirements as he or she
8 deems appropriate to ensure that eligible program participants
9 who receive a training stipend or other financial incentive,
10 but fail to complete their service obligation, repay all or a
11 portion of such stipend or other incentive.

12 (5) FUNDING.--There is appropriated from the General
13 Revenue Fund in fiscal year 2001-2002 to the Commissioner of
14 Education the amount of \$13.5 million for the purpose of
15 providing 2,700 stipends of \$5,000 each to eligible program
16 participants, according to the provisions of this section.

17 (6) PROGRAM EVALUATION.--The district school board of
18 each school district in which an eligible program participant
19 has been hired shall submit such information to the
20 Commissioner of Education as the commissioner deems necessary
21 to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The commissioner
22 must provide the same information to the Speaker of the House
23 of Representatives and to the President of the Senate.

24 (7) RULES.--The State Board of Education may adopt
25 rules pursuant to sections 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida
26 Statutes, to carry out the provisions of this section.

27 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.
28
29
30
31

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

SENATE SUMMARY

Creates the Transition to Teaching Pilot Program with the intent of addressing the need of high-poverty school districts for teachers. Defines terms. Provides procedures for applying to participate in the program. Provides for the award of stipends. Requires the Commissioner of Education to distribute awards equitably. Requires a program participant to serve in a high-poverty school district for 3 years. Requires the commissioner to establish requirements to ensure that program participants fulfill their service obligation or repay any stipend or financial incentive received. Provides funding for the award of stipends. Provides for program evaluation. Authorizes the adoption of rules.