



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  
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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.  
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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.