

By the Committee on Education; and Senator Wasserman Schultz

304-2424-03

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to student financial
3 assistance; amending s. 1009.57, F.S.;
4 requiring the Florida Teacher Scholarship and
5 Forgivable Loan Program to provide scholarship
6 assistance to education paraprofessionals and
7 substitute teachers seeking qualification to
8 teach in critical teacher shortage areas;
9 establishing a scholarship loan program to
10 provide scholarship loans to students who teach
11 in poor or underperforming areas in the state;
12 providing eligibility requirements; providing
13 for loan forgiveness; amending s. 1009.58,
14 F.S.; expanding the critical teacher shortage
15 tuition reimbursement program; authorizing
16 tuition reimbursement for courses needed for
17 recertification; authorizing certain
18 tuition-free courses on a space-available
19 basis; amending s. 1009.59, F.S.; specifying
20 that the Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan
21 Forgiveness Program applies to personnel
22 seeking employment in certain high priority
23 location areas; increasing the amount of loan
24 principal repayments; amending s. 1003.52,
25 F.S.; conforming provisions; providing an
26 appropriation; providing an effective date.

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28 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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1 Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 1009.57, Florida
2 Statutes, is amended, and subsection (4) is added to that
3 section, to read:

4 1009.57 Florida Teacher Scholarship and Forgivable
5 Loan Program.--

6 (1) There is created the Florida Teacher Scholarship
7 and Forgivable Loan Program to be administered by the
8 Department of Education. The program shall provide scholarship
9 assistance to eligible students for lower-division
10 undergraduate study and loan assistance to eligible students
11 for upper-division undergraduate and graduate study. The
12 program shall also provide scholarship assistance for
13 lower-division or upper-division undergraduate study to
14 education paraprofessionals and substitute teachers to attain
15 required qualifications to teach in a subject area or a high
16 priority location area pursuant to s. 1009.59.The primary
17 purpose of the program is to attract capable and promising
18 students to the teaching profession, attract teachers to areas
19 of projected or current critical teacher shortage, attract
20 liberal arts and science graduates to teaching, and provide
21 opportunity for persons making midcareer decisions to enter
22 the teaching profession. The State Board of Education shall
23 adopt rules necessary to administer the program and shall
24 annually identify critical teacher shortage areas.

25 (4) Within the Florida Teacher Scholarship and
26 Forgivable Loan Program is established a scholarship loan
27 program to provide 4-year scholarship loans of up to \$5,000
28 per year to Florida high school seniors interested in
29 preparing to teach in the public schools of the state. The
30 scholarship loan program shall be administered by the
31 Department of Education.

1 (a) To be eligible for a scholarship loan, a student
2 must:

3 1. Have maintained a minimum cumulative grade point
4 average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent in high school
5 and have scored at least 1100 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT.

6 2. Have declared the intent to teach for at least 3
7 years in a public school in a poor or underperforming area
8 identified by the department. For purposes of this subsection,
9 the department shall annually identify poor or underperforming
10 areas in the state.

11 3. Meet the general requirements for student
12 eligibility as provided in s. 1009.40, except as otherwise
13 provided in this subsection.

14 (b) A scholarship loan may be used for attendance at a
15 state university, a community college, or an independent
16 institution as defined in s. 1009.89. The scholarship loan
17 shall be used for tuition and fees and may be used to purchase
18 books and housing.

19 (c) A scholarship loan may be renewed annually if the
20 student meets the eligibility criteria established by the
21 department.

22 (d) All scholarship loans shall be evidenced by notes
23 made payable to the Department of Education that shall bear
24 interest at the rate of 8 percent annually beginning after
25 termination of the scholarship loan. The scholarship loan may
26 be terminated by the recipient withdrawing from school or by
27 the recipient not meeting the standards set by the department.

28 (e) The Department of Education shall forgive the loan
29 if, within 7 years after graduation from a postsecondary
30 degree program, the recipient teaches for 3 consecutive years
31 in a public school in a poor or underperforming area. The

1 department shall also forgive the loan if it finds that it is
2 impossible for the recipient to meet the teaching requirements
3 due to death or permanent disability of the recipient.

4 (f) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for the
5 scholarship loan program shall be deposited in the State
6 Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund to be used for
7 scholarship loans.

8 Section 2. Section 1009.58, Florida Statutes, is
9 amended to read:

10 1009.58 Critical teacher shortage tuition assistance
11 and reimbursement program.--

12 (1) A critical teacher shortage tuition assistance and
13 reimbursement program shall be established for the purpose of
14 improving the skills and knowledge of current teachers or
15 persons preparing to teach in critical teacher shortage areas.

16 (2) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
17 implement the critical teacher shortage tuition assistance and
18 reimbursement program. Any full-time public school employee or
19 developmental research school employee certified to teach in
20 this state is eligible for the program. For the purposes of
21 this program, tuition reimbursement shall be limited to
22 courses in critical teacher shortage areas as determined by
23 the State Board of Education. Such courses shall be:

24 (a) Graduate-level courses leading to a master's,
25 specialist, or doctoral degree;

26 (b) Graduate-level courses leading to a new
27 certification area; ~~or~~

28 (c) State-approved undergraduate courses leading to an
29 advanced degree or new certification area; ~~or~~.

30 (d) Graduate-level courses or state-approved
31 undergraduate courses leading to recertification.

1 (3) Participants may receive tuition reimbursement
2 payments for up to 9 semester hours, or the equivalent in
3 quarter hours, per year, at a rate not to exceed \$78 per
4 semester hour, up to a total of 36 semester hours. All tuition
5 reimbursements shall be contingent on passing an approved
6 course with a minimum grade of 3.0 or its equivalent.

7 (4) Participants may enroll in tuition-free courses on
8 a space-available basis at state universities when such
9 courses lead to certification in a new critical teacher
10 shortage subject area or to recertification by a teacher
11 employed in a critical teacher shortage area.

12 ~~(5)(4)~~ This section shall be implemented only to the
13 extent specifically funded and authorized by law.

14 Section 3. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 1009.59,
15 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

16 1009.59 Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan
17 Forgiveness Program.--

18 (1) The Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan
19 Forgiveness Program is established to encourage qualified
20 personnel to seek employment in subject areas in which
21 critical teacher shortages exist and in high priority location
22 areas in which at least 50 percent of the students receive
23 free or reduced-price school lunches, as identified annually
24 by the State Board of Education. The primary function of the
25 program is to make repayments toward loans received by
26 students from federal programs or commercial lending
27 institutions for the support of postsecondary education study.
28 Repayments are intended to be made to qualified applicants who
29 begin teaching for the first time in designated subject areas,
30 and who apply during their first year of teaching as certified
31 teachers in these subject areas, and to qualified applicants

1 who begin teaching for the first time in a high priority
2 location area in which at least 50 percent of the students
3 receive free or reduced-price school lunches.

4 (2) From the funds available, the Department of
5 Education may make loan principal repayments as follows:

6 (a) Up to \$5,000~~\$2,500~~ a year for up to 4 years on
7 behalf of selected graduates of state-approved undergraduate
8 postsecondary teacher preparation programs, persons certified
9 to teach pursuant to any applicable teacher certification
10 requirements, or selected teacher preparation graduates from
11 any state participating in the Interstate Agreement on the
12 Qualification of Educational Personnel.

13 (b) Up to \$7,500~~\$5,000~~ a year for up to 2 years on
14 behalf of selected graduates of state-approved graduate
15 postsecondary teacher preparation programs, persons with
16 graduate degrees certified to teach pursuant to any applicable
17 teacher certification requirements, or selected teacher
18 preparation graduates from any state participating in the
19 Interstate Agreement on the Qualification of Educational
20 Personnel.

21 (c) All repayments shall be contingent on continued
22 proof of employment in the designated subject areas or high
23 priority location areas in this state and shall be made
24 directly to the holder of the loan. The state shall not bear
25 responsibility for the collection of any interest charges or
26 other remaining balance. In the event that designated critical
27 teacher shortage subject areas or high priority location areas
28 are changed by the State Board of Education, a teacher shall
29 continue to be eligible for loan forgiveness as long as he or
30 she continues to teach in the subject area or high priority
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1 location area for which the original loan repayment was made
2 and otherwise meets all conditions of eligibility.

3 Section 4. Subsection (10) of section 1003.52, Florida
4 Statutes, is amended to read:

5 1003.52 Educational services in Department of Juvenile
6 Justice programs.--

7 (10) The district school board shall recruit and train
8 teachers who are interested, qualified, or experienced in
9 educating students in juvenile justice programs. Students in
10 juvenile justice programs shall be provided a wide range of
11 educational programs and opportunities including textbooks,
12 technology, instructional support, and other resources
13 available to students in public schools. Teachers assigned to
14 educational programs in juvenile justice settings in which the
15 district school board operates the educational program shall
16 be selected by the district school board in consultation with
17 the director of the juvenile justice facility. Educational
18 programs in juvenile justice facilities shall have access to
19 the substitute teacher pool utilized by the district school
20 board. Full-time teachers working in juvenile justice schools,
21 whether employed by a district school board or a provider,
22 shall be eligible for the critical teacher shortage tuition
23 assistance and reimbursement program as defined by s. 1009.58.

24 Section 5. There is hereby appropriated from the
25 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education the sum of
26 \$12 million to be divided evenly among the Florida Teacher
27 Scholarship and Forgivable Loan Program, the critical teacher
28 shortage tuition assistance and reimbursement program, and the
29 Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness Program for
30 the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act.

31 Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

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STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
Senate Bill 2100

Provides that scholarship loans made pursuant to the bill's provisions will be forgiven if recipients spend three years teaching in an underserved area in the state within 7 years after graduation from a postsecondary degree program.

Provides for a \$12 million appropriation, to be divided evenly among the programs amended by the bill.

Includes a technical change.