



2015 SENATE BILL 633

January 22, 2016 - Introduced by Senators VINEHOUT, RINGHAND, CARPENTER and L. TAYLOR, cosponsored by Representatives DANOU, BERCEAU, BILLINGS, BROSTOFF, CONSIDINE, OHNSTAD, POPE, SINICKI, SUBECK, C. TAYLOR and ZEPNICK. Referred to Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges.

1 **AN ACT to create** 20.235 (1) (fr) and 39.387 of the statutes; **relating to:** creation
2 of a grant program for teachers employed by sparsely populated school districts
3 and granting rule-making authority.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) administers various financial assistance programs to assist teachers. Those programs include programs under which HEAB provides loans to college students and then forgives a certain amount of those loans after the loan recipient has been employed as a teacher in the Milwaukee Public Schools, as a teacher of visually impaired pupils or as an orientation and mobility instructor in this state, or as a teacher in a school district in this state in which minority students constitute at least 29 percent of the membership of the school district.

This bill creates a rural teacher grant program (grant program), to be administered by HEAB, to encourage eligible teachers, as defined in the bill, to teach in schools operated by eligible school districts, as defined in the bill. Under the bill, 1) an “eligible school district” is a school district whose membership in the school year preceding the school year for which a grant is awarded under the grant program divided by the school district’s area in square miles is less than ten; and 2) an “eligible teacher” is a teacher who teaches in a school operated by an eligible school district.

The bill requires HEAB to grant financial assistance to an eligible teacher who is nominated by his or her school district for participation in the grant program and who submits a claim for that financial assistance after each year in which the eligible

SENATE BILL 633

1 (a) “Eligible school district” means a school district whose membership in the
2 school year preceding the school year for which a grant is awarded to an eligible
3 teacher under sub. (4) divided by the school district’s area in square miles is less than
4 10.

5 (b) “Eligible teacher” means a teacher who meets the eligibility requirements
6 specified in sub. (3).

7 **(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.** There is established, to be administered by the
8 board, a rural teacher grant program to encourage eligible teachers to teach in
9 schools operated by eligible school districts by providing grants of financial
10 assistance to those eligible teachers as provided in sub. (4).

11 **(3) ELIGIBILITY.** A teacher is eligible for financial assistance as provided under
12 sub. (4) if the teacher meets all of the following requirements:

13 (a) He or she teaches in a school operated by an eligible school district.

14 (b) He or she does not appear on the statewide support lien docket under s.
15 49.854 (2) (b), unless the teacher provides to the board a payment agreement that has
16 been approved by the county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5) and that is
17 consistent with rules promulgated under s. 49.858 (2) (a).

18 **(4) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.** (a) From the appropriation under s. 20.235 (1) (fr),
19 the board shall grant financial assistance to eligible teachers who are nominated by
20 their school districts for participation in the grant program as provided in par. (b) and
21 who submit claims for that financial assistance as provided in par. (c). The maximum
22 amount of financial assistance that an eligible teacher may receive under this
23 subsection is \$1,000 for the first school year, \$2,000 for the 2nd school year, \$2,000
24 for the 3rd school year, \$2,000 for the 4th school year, and \$3,000 for the 5th school
25 year in which the eligible teacher participates in the grant program. An eligible

SENATE BILL 633**SECTION 3**

1 teacher may receive financial assistance under this subsection for no more than 5
2 school years. An eligible teacher who receives financial assistance under this
3 subsection shall use that financial assistance only for the purpose of repaying
4 student loans incurred to defray the cost of tuition, fees, and expenses for programs
5 of study relating to the teaching profession. The board may provide financial
6 assistance on a prorated basis to an eligible teacher who is employed less than full
7 time.

8 (b) An eligible school district may nominate an eligible teacher for participation
9 in the grant program by submitting that nomination to the board in a form prescribed
10 by the board. No more than 4 eligible teachers employed by a given eligible school
11 district may participate in the grant program in a given school year. The nomination
12 shall include such information as the board may require to establish that the school
13 district employing the teacher is an eligible school district and that the teacher is an
14 eligible teacher and shall provide any other information the board may require by
15 rule promulgated under sub. (5).

16 (c) After each year in which an eligible teacher who has been accepted for
17 participation in the grant program teaches in a school operated by an eligible school
18 district, the eligible teacher may submit to the board a claim for financial assistance.
19 The claim shall include the signature of the eligible teacher and of a representative
20 of the school district employing the eligible teacher certifying that during the period
21 for which financial assistance is claimed the school district was an eligible school
22 district and the eligible teacher taught in a school operated by that eligible school
23 district, shall include a commitment by the eligible teacher that he or she will use
24 the financial assistance to repay student loans incurred to defray the cost of tuition,
25 fees, and expenses for programs of study relating to the teaching profession, and

SENATE BILL 633

1 shall provide such other information as the board may require by rule promulgated
2 under sub. (5) to verify the claimant's eligibility for financial assistance.

3 (d) If the board determines that a claimant under par. (c) is eligible to receive
4 financial assistance under this subsection, the board shall provide that assistance,
5 subject to the amounts available in the appropriation account under s. 20.235 (1) (fr).
6 If the amount of financial assistance claimed in a fiscal year exceeds the amounts
7 available in that appropriation account, the board shall prorate the financial
8 assistance paid in that fiscal year in the proportion that the amounts available bear
9 to the total amount of financial assistance payable in that fiscal year.

10 (5) RULES. The board shall promulgate rules to implement and administer this
11 section. Those rules shall include rules specifying the information a school district
12 must include in a nomination for participation in the grant program under sub. (4)
13 (b) and the information a teacher must include in a claim for financial assistance
14 under sub. (4) (c).

15 **SECTION 4. Initial applicability.**

16 (1) RURAL TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM. This act first applies to an eligible teacher,
17 as defined in section 39.387 (1) (b) of the statutes, as created by this act, who teaches
18 in a school operated by an eligible school district, as defined in section 39.387 (1) (a)
19 of the statutes, as created by this act, in the 2016-17 school year.

20

(END)