
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



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2019 Wisconsin Act 35
[2019 Assembly Bill 51]

Minority Teacher Loan Program

BACKGROUND

State law provides for a minority teacher loan program, under which the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) may award loans to eligible minority Wisconsin residents who are enrolled in a Wisconsin institution of higher education in a program of study leading to a teacher's license in a discipline identified as a teacher shortage area. Under prior law, a "minority student" was defined as: (1) a Black American; (2) an American Indian; (3) a Hispanic; or (4) a person admitted to the United States after December 31, 1975, who is either a former citizen of or whose ancestor was or is a citizen of Laos, Vietnam, or Cambodia.

HEAB was required to forgive 25 percent of the loan for each school year that a recipient was employed by a public or private school located in the City of Milwaukee as a full-time teacher in a high-demand area related to the recipient's college discipline and received a rating of proficient or distinguished under the educator effectiveness system.

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The act expands the definition of "minority student" and changes the location in which a loan recipient must be employed in order to qualify for loan forgiveness. Specifically, the act expands the definition of "minority student" to also include: (1) an Alaskan native; (2) any student whose ancestry includes two or more races; and (3) instead of a person admitted to the United States after December 31, 1975, as described above, any student of Asian or Pacific Island origin.

The act also provides that a loan recipient may be eligible for loan forgiveness for each school year that he or she is employed as a full-time teacher in a high-demand area in a public, private, or tribal school located in a Wisconsin school district in which the enrolled pupil membership is comprised of at least 40 percent minority students, rather than only in the City of Milwaukee. The act retains the requirement that the recipient also receive a rating of proficient or distinguished under the educator effectiveness system in order to be eligible for loan forgiveness.

Effective date: March 1, 2020

RES:mca;jal