

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 1684

SPONSOR: Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and Senator Klein

SUBJECT: Transition to Teaching

DATE: April 11, 2001 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>White</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	<u>McKee</u>	<u>Hickam</u>	<u>AED</u>	<u>Favorable/CS</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	<u>Withdrawn: Fav/CS</u>
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill creates a program to recruit retiring or career-changing professionals into teaching. Modeled after the successful Troops to Teachers Program, it will provide up to \$5,000 from federal funds to candidates who agree to become certified and teach in Florida schools for 1 year for each year of their receipt of the stipend.

This bill creates an undesignated section of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Need for Teachers

The Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research projects a need for a total of 162,296 new teachers in Florida between now and 2010. This year, 14,366 teachers are expected to resign or terminate their employment, and 1,081 additional teachers will be needed to accommodate growing student enrollments. Last year, almost 9 percent of Florida's teaching force needed to be replaced.

Florida's increasing student population, especially at the secondary school level, has increased the need for teachers. In Florida, 52 of the 67 school districts have increased their student population since 1995. Statewide, the student population has grown by more than 200,000 students. Student growth means that 11,400 additional teachers will be needed to accommodate higher enrollments.

Only about 6,000 teacher candidates graduate each year from state-approved teacher education programs.

Existing Programs

Florida has several programs designed to make available fellowships, forgivable loans, or tuition reimbursement for teachers who agree to teach in Florida's public schools for a number of years. These include:

- Student fellowship program (s. 231.6215, F.S.), which if funded will provide annual forgivable loans of \$6500 to rising juniors who agree to teach in Florida for 3 years. Fellows must complete a major in a content area other than teaching and attain teaching expertise through a 12-month program designed by the university or college.
- Minority Teacher Education Scholars Program and the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers (ss. 240.4128 and 240.4129, F.S.)
- Critical Teacher Shortage Tuition Reimbursement Program (s. 240.4064, F.S.)
- Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness Program (s. 231.621, F.S.)
- Florida Teacher Scholarship and Forgivable Loan Program (s. 240.4063, F.S.)
- Grants for teachers for special training in exceptional student education (s. 240.405, F.S.)

Troops to Teachers Program

The Troops to Teachers program is designed to help former military personnel enter public education as teachers. The federal government funds the program as a \$4 million grant program to school districts. Since the inception of the program in January 1994, 3,000 service members have entered the teaching profession. The program was created in the 1993 Defense Authorization Bill to ease the effect of military downsizing. It is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Support, called DANTEs, a Department of Defense agency. Currently the program operates 20 state Placement Assistance offices, including one in Florida.¹ According to officials in the Department of Education, the program has recruited 270 new teachers for Florida's schools. The success of these programs is not so much in the numbers but in their ability to meet demographic or program needs. Almost all of the teachers are male, 29 percent are members of minority groups, and 66 percent are teaching mathematics or science. Eleven percent reported that they were teaching general special education.² A related program, called Soldiers to Scholars, provides scholarships to former military personnel who are completing their baccalaureate degrees and have agreed to enter the teaching profession. They live in high-poverty areas of Orlando while attending college, and most (73 percent) accept employment in inner-city schools. Currently 34 people are in this program.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The legislation under consideration will create the Transition to Teaching Program to encourage and assist mid-career professionals who want to become teachers. It is intended to enable professional associations, business and trade groups, unions, school districts, postsecondary education institutions, community organizations, and other organizations to assist their retiring employees who want to become teachers.

¹C. Emily Feistritzer and others, *Profile of Troops to Teachers*, National Center for Education Information, 1998.

²*Ibid.*

Program Applicants

The bill authorizes two types of applicants to be eligible to receive a grant to implement the program:

- A community college, state university, or independent college or university is eligible for a grant to implement the Transition to Teaching Program by working with firms that employ professionals or represent employees.
- A consortium of organizations is eligible, but it must include a postsecondary education institution.

The Commissioner of Education will design the process for receiving and evaluating grant proposals in accordance with state and federal appropriations guidelines and will request proposals from eligible applicants. Grants may be awarded only to the extent that funding is provided.

Application

The bill requires the following components of an application:

- Describe the target group of career-changing professionals upon which the applicant will focus in carrying out its program, including a description of the characteristics of the target group that shows how the knowledge and experience of its members are likely to improve their ability to become effective teachers.
- Describe how the applicant will identify and recruit program participants.
- Describe how the applicant will ensure that program participants are placed and teach in eligible school districts in this state.
- Describe the teacher support services that program participants will receive throughout at least their first year of teaching.
- Describe how the applicant will collaborate with other institutions, agencies, or organizations to recruit, train, place, and support program participants, including evidence of the commitment of those institutions, agencies, or organizations to the applicant's program.

Evaluation

The bill requires the Commissioner of Education to require an evaluation process to measure the progress and effectiveness of the program, including:

- The program's goals and objectives.
- The performance indicators that the applicant will use to measure the program's progress.
- The outcome measures that will be used to determine the program's effectiveness. An assurance that the applicant will provide the commissioner with information the commissioner finds necessary to determine the overall effectiveness of the programs.

Expenditures

All funds provided for a program must be used to provide training stipends and other financial incentives for program participants, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 per participant.

Eligible applicants are encouraged to implement the program using the following components:

- Recruiting program participants
- Assisting higher education institutions to tailor their training to meet the needs of professionals who are changing their careers
- Placement activities

- Post-placement support activities

Repayment

The bill requires each participant who receives a grant from the program to pursue a teacher-preparation program to agree to teach in an eligible school district in this state for at least 3 years after certification. To be eligible, a school district must meet the requirements established in regulations that implement the Omnibus Appropriations Bill of 2003. The commissioner will establish conditions under which a participant must repay all or a portion of the training stipend if the participant fails to complete his or her service obligation.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Retiring or career-changing professionals will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 to become certified and teach in Florida schools for 1 year for each year the stipend was received.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill of 2000 contains \$34 million for the “Transition to Teaching” program; it is unknown how much of this appropriation will be allocated to Florida.

The Florida Department of Education can absorb the administrative costs of the program unless Florida receives an inordinate proportion of the federal funds available nationally.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

³ In the federal Transition to Teaching Act, an eligible school district had to be “high poverty,” but the definition of that term made most Florida school districts eligible because they are so large.

VII. Related Issues:**Transition to Teaching Act**

On June 24, 1999, the United States House of Representatives passed H. R. 2344, the “Transition to Teaching Act,” by Representative Jim Davis of Florida. The Senate never acted on the bill, but on December 15, 2000, \$34 million was added to the federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill of 2000 for a program called “Transition to Teaching.” The regulations for allocating the funds to states have not yet been approved, but this bill is designed after H.R. 2344. If allocations are authorized for programs with a similar design, this bill could streamline Florida’s ability to qualify for some of the funding.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s sponsor or the Florida Senate.
