

The Florida Senate
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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

Prepared By: Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

BILL: SB 1816

INTRODUCER: Senator Posey

SUBJECT: Critical Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness

DATE: March 22, 2007

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Carrouth</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	<u>EA</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill revises eligibility requirements for education loan repayments through the Critical Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program (Program). Under the bill, teachers would have to meet the following requirements to be eligible:

- Must be currently teaching for the first time in a critical teacher shortage area as determined annually by the Florida Department of Education (DOE);
- Must have a valid temporary Florida teaching certificate or certification or licensure in the critical shortage area during the year in which loan repayment is requested; and
- Must have completed a full year of teaching in the designated shortage area in a public school, a developmental research school, or a K-12 private school as defined in statute and recognized by the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools (FAANS).

This bill amends section 1009.59 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Section 1009.59, F.S. establishes the Critical Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program to encourage qualified personnel to seek teaching positions in critical teacher shortage areas as identified annually by the State Board of Education. Under this program, the DOE is authorized to make loan repayments to qualified applicants as follows:

- Up to \$2,500 a year for up to four years for undergraduate completers; and
- Up to \$5,000 a year for up to two years for postgraduate completers.

Students receiving certain scholarships or fellowship loans are not eligible to participate in the program.

As directed in s. 1009.59(4), F.S., the State Board of Education adopted Rule 6A-20.013, F.A.C.¹ for the administration of the Program, which requires applicants:

- To have, as a minimum in the first year of application, a valid temporary Florida Educator's Certificate or license which indicates certification or licensure in the critical teacher shortage subject area in which employed for the academic year for which funds are requested; and
- To have taught a full school year, as defined in s. 1003.02(1)(g), F.S., in a Florida publicly-funded school or developmental research school, in a designated critical teacher shortage subject area. If an otherwise eligible applicant completes eligible teaching service for at least 90 days during a school year and does not complete one full year of teaching service, the Department may provide up to one-half of a full award.

The certification requirements include certificates provided to new graduates of approved teacher preparation programs both in and out-of-state and those individuals holding certification accepted by Florida from other states.² This would include temporary and professional certificates and those meeting standards for reciprocity from other states.

The rule appears to mandate additional requirements that are not required in law: (1) It limits application of the Program to teachers in public schools or publicly funded schools, and (2) it requires a teacher to have taught a full year in a public school.

Section 1012.07, F.S., requires the State Board of Education to annually identify critical teacher shortage areas based on data collected from the previous fall.³ Critical teacher shortage areas identified for the 2007-2008 school year are:

- Secondary math;
- Secondary sciences;
- Reading;
- ESE;
- ESOL;
- Foreign languages;
- School psychologists; and
- Technology education/industrial arts.⁴

The 2006 Legislature appropriated \$2.5 million for the Critical Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program, an increase of more than \$760,000 above the 2005 appropriation. According to the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), 3,027 teachers received loan

¹ <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?ID=6A-20.013>

² Interstate Agreement on the Qualification of Educational Personnel - www.jflalc.org/upload/336.pdf

³ Critical teacher shortage areas for the 2007-08 school year were adopted by the State Board in February 2007, based on data from the fall of 2006.

⁴ The 2007-2008 critical shortage areas are identical to those designated for the previous school year.

forgiveness awards in 2005-2006, with the highest percentage of awards provided to exceptional education teachers.⁵ The average amount awarded in 2005-2006 was \$863 for graduate school loans and \$418 for undergraduate loans.⁶

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill revises the eligibility requirements for education loan repayments through the Critical Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program (Program).

Under the bill, teachers would have to meet the following requirements to be eligible:

- Must be currently teaching for the first time in a critical teacher shortage area as determined annually by the Florida Department of Education (DOE);
- Must have a valid temporary Florida teaching certificate or certification or licensure in the critical shortage area during the year in which loan repayment is requested; and
- Must have completed a full year of teaching in the designated shortage area in a public school, a developmental research school, or a K-12 private school as defined in statute and recognized by the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools.⁷

All of these provisions are currently stated in s. 1009.59, F.S., or State Board Rule 6A-20.013, F.A.C., with the exception of providing eligibility for teachers in private K-12 schools recognized by FAANS. FAANS, however, does not serve as an accrediting agency for individual schools, but rather serves as an umbrella organization for agencies that provide accreditation to private schools.

Under the bill, private school teachers in critical teacher shortage areas identified by the DOE would be eligible to apply, provided other eligibility requirements were met.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

⁵ www.firn.edu/doe/evaluation/pdf/crit1200.pdf - Page 11

⁶ These award amounts are included in the Critical Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program Fact Sheet available on the OSFA website and in all communications from that office. -

<https://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/home/uamain.asp>

⁷ <http://www.faans.org>

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Eligible private school teachers would reap the benefits of education loan forgiveness. The amount of the award is indeterminate as it depends on the amount appropriated for the program and the number of eligible applicants. Because FAANS does not collect data on teachers by subject area, it is not known how many private school teachers would be eligible and, of those, how many would apply for loan forgiveness under the program.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The amount of the award per teacher and the total program cost is indeterminate as it depends on the amount appropriated for the program and the number of eligible applicants. If the appropriation is not increased but there is an increase in eligible teachers, there will be a reduction in the amount of loan repayments per eligible teacher.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
