

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-212.2:1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program.

[H 2607]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-212.2:1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-212.2:1. Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program established; purpose; Board of Education to administer Program; eligibility requirements for scholarship; collaboration and consultation with State Council of Higher Education; repayment of scholarship required.

A. ~~From~~ With such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose ~~and from such gifts, donations, and bequests as may be received on its behalf~~, there is hereby established ~~within~~ the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program ~~the Minorities in Teaching Program~~, hereinafter referred to as the "Program," to increase the number of ~~minorities students~~ pursuing careers in teaching, ~~to assist paraprofessionals in the classroom in becoming fully licensed teachers, and to increase the diversity of persons pursuing careers in teaching. The Program shall consist of three components: (i) awards to students pursuing teaching degrees in critical teacher shortage areas; (ii) awards to assist paraprofessionals in becoming fully licensed teachers; and (iii) awards to at-risk students, pursuant to subsection B.~~

B. There is hereby established, within the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, a program focused solely on increasing diversity among teachers by providing incentives for at-risk students to pursue careers in teaching, which shall be known as the Diversity in Teaching Program. The Diversity in Teaching Program shall provide scholarships to at-risk students enrolled in undergraduate teacher education programs and shall be funded with such moneys as may be appropriated for this purpose, and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds as may be received on its behalf by the Board of Education and deposited in the Diversity in Teaching Fund pursuant to subsection G. The Board shall establish a procedure and criteria for awarding the Diversity in Teaching scholarships.

C. The Board of Education shall establish criteria for determining, biennially, critical teacher shortage areas for awarding scholarships pursuant to this section, ~~which and for defining "high concentrations" of at-risk students. The criteria~~ shall include such factors as the needs in teacher endorsement areas and at the elementary and secondary grade levels, ~~gender, ethnicity, under-served underserved~~ geographical regions of the Commonwealth, and school divisions with high concentrations of at-risk students. The Program shall be administered by the Board of Education, which shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary for the implementation of the Program. The Board shall, before implementing the Program, document in writing the basis for any ~~racial or gender~~ preferences ~~for at-risk students~~ in any component of the Program, or in the regulations and policies governing such Program, and, upon making awards, that scholarships have been awarded in accordance with constitutional principles. The Board shall consult with the State Council of Higher Education in the development and implementation of the Program.

~~B. D. The Board shall develop and implement the Program by July 1, 1997. The Program shall consist of scholarships awarded annually to undergraduate students in the junior or senior year of college at an accredited public or private four-year institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, who (i) are enrolled full time in an approved teacher education program in a critical teacher shortage area, as may be determined by the Board of Education biennially; (ii) have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.7 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent; and (iii) are nominated for such scholarship by the institution where they are enrolled.~~

~~Minority~~ At-risk students enrolled in any area of an approved teacher education program ~~and male students enrolled in an approved teacher education program~~ in elementary or middle school who meet the program requirements may be eligible for such award. *Paraprofessionals who are enrolled or accepted as part-time or full-time undergraduate students in an accredited institution of higher education shall be eligible to compete for and receive such awards.*

~~C. E.~~ Before any teaching scholarship is awarded in accordance with the provisions of this section, the scholarship recipient shall sign a promissory note under which he agrees to pursue an approved teacher education program full time at an accredited public or private four-year institution of higher education in Virginia until his graduation. *An eligible paraprofessional shall sign a promissory note under which he agrees to pursue an approved teacher education program either part time or full time.* Upon graduation, the scholarship recipient shall begin teaching in the public schools of the

57 Commonwealth in the first full academic year after graduating from college and becoming eligible for a
58 teaching license, and shall thereafter teach continuously in Virginia for the same number of years that he
59 was the beneficiary of such scholarship. Such scholarship recipient may fulfill the teaching obligation by
60 accepting a teaching position in one of the critical teacher shortage areas determined by the Board of
61 Education, or in a school division with high concentrations of at-risk students, or at grade levels or in a
62 geographical region of the state where ~~minority or male~~ teachers *who have been at-risk students* are
63 under-represented. The Board of Education may recover the total amount of funds awarded as a
64 scholarship, or the appropriate proportion thereof, including any accrued interest, if the scholarship
65 recipient fails to honor the teaching obligation.

66 ~~D. F.~~ To ensure a more diverse representation among classroom teachers, particularly at the
67 elementary grade level, the Program shall be designed to attract and encourage elementary and
68 secondary school students, particularly ~~minority~~ *at-risk* students, to pursue an approved teacher education
69 program. The Program shall be developed in accordance with the provisions of the appropriation act
70 governing the administration of the Pre-Collegiate Program. The Program may include outreach activities
71 such as student-teacher mentorship programs, linkages between public schools and institutions of higher
72 education, and other programs and activities designed to generate interest in the teaching profession. The
73 Board may provide for pilot programs before statewide implementation.

74 *G. There is hereby created in the Department of the Treasury a special nonreverting fund known as*
75 *the Diversity in Teaching Fund, hereinafter referred to as the "Fund." The Fund shall be established on*
76 *the books of the Comptroller, and any moneys remaining in the Fund at the end of the biennium shall*
77 *not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. The Fund shall consist of such moneys as*
78 *may be appropriated for the Diversity in Teaching Program and such gifts, donations, grants, bequests,*
79 *and other funds as may be received on its behalf by the Board of Education. The Fund shall be used*
80 *solely to fund the Diversity in Teaching Program for the purpose of increasing diversity in teaching by*
81 *providing incentives for at-risk students to pursue careers as teachers. Interest earned on such moneys*
82 *shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely to award*
83 *scholarships pursuant to the Diversity in Teaching Program as provided in this section. Disbursements*
84 *from the Fund for such scholarships shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the*
85 *Comptroller upon written request of the President of the Board of Education.*

86 *H. For the purposes of this section, "at-risk students" means students having socioeconomic or*
87 *cultural risk factors which research indicates may negatively influence educational success.*

88 **2. That any funds appropriated to the Minorities in Teaching Program pursuant to § 22.1-212.2:1**
89 **shall be deemed to be appropriated to the Diversity in Teaching Program and shall be used solely**
90 **for the purposes of the Diversity in Teaching Program as described in this act.**