

# SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

## ASSEMBLY, No. 5420

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 27, 2023

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 5420 (1R) with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the New Jersey Student Teacher Scholarship Program in the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to reduce financial barriers to teacher certification.

Under the amended bill, the program is to provide scholarships to students completing required clinical practice through a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing educator preparation program at an institution of higher education in the State. A student is eligible to receive a scholarship of up to \$7,200 for each semester of full-time clinical practice completed in a school in the State.

To be eligible for a scholarship, an applicant is required to: be a resident of the State; be enrolled full-time in an approved program of study; and complete any steps required by the approved program of study to be eligible to apply for clinical practice. The bill requires the authority to establish an application process for the program.

The authority, in coordination with the Department of Education, may establish additional eligibility requirements and minimum qualifications for the program. Additionally, the authority, in coordination with the department, is to annually collect data on the program.

Finally, the amended bill details reasons for which a student's scholarship may be terminated. The bill also stipulates that the scholarship is to be terminated if the student is dismissed from the institution of education preparation program for academic or disciplinary reasons or withdraws due to illness. Under the amended bill, the student would not be required to repay the scholarship in either situation.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 5420 (1R) is identical to Senate Bill No. 3886, which was amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- rename the program the New Jersey Student Teacher Scholarship program and update the provision of the bill to reflect this change;
- extend the program to eligible students enrolled in post-baccalaureate programs;
- remove the requirement that an applicant be a United States citizen, permanent resident alien, or any student eligible to complete the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application in order to be eligible for the scholarship;
- clarify that the student's scholarship is to continue while a student remains in good academic standing as defined by the institution;
- remove the requirement that a student is required to repay the full amount of the moneys received under the program as a debt to the State if a student is dismissed for disciplinary reasons as noted in the bill; and
- revise the bill's title and synopsis to reflect these changes.