

SENATE, No. 2825

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 17, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Pou

SYNOPSIS

Establishes loan redemption program for certain bilingual education teachers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/28/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing a loan redemption program for certain public
2 school teachers and supplementing chapter 71C of Title 18A of
3 the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
10 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

11 “Eligible student loan expenses” means the outstanding balance
12 of the principal and interest due on student loans used to cover the
13 cost of attendance while enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate
14 degree program at an institution of higher education.

15 “Low performing public school” means a school located in New
16 Jersey, under collegiate grade, which is operated by a school
17 district, a charter school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426
18 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.), or a renaissance school established pursuant
19 to P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.), that meets the criteria of
20 paragraph (1), paragraph (2), or paragraph (3):

21 (1) among all students in that school to whom a State
22 assessment was administered, the sum of the percent of students
23 scoring in the not yet meeting expectations and partially meeting
24 expectations categories in both the language arts and mathematics
25 subject areas of the State assessments exceeded 40 percent in each
26 of the prior two school years; or

27 (2) among all students in that school to whom a State
28 assessment was administered, the sum of the percent of students
29 scoring in the not yet meeting expectations and partially meeting
30 expectations categories in either the language arts or mathematics
31 subject areas of the State assessment exceeded 65 percent in each of
32 the prior two school years; or

33 (3) is listed on the Teacher Cancellation Low Income Directory
34 established by the United States Department of Education.

35 (4) A school that meets the criteria of paragraph (1) or
36 paragraph (2) of this section shall continue to be designated a low
37 performing public school until such time that the sum of the percent
38 of students scoring in the not yet meeting expectations and partially
39 meeting expectations categories in both the language arts and
40 mathematics subject areas of the State assessments is less than or
41 equal to the sum of the Statewide percent of students scoring in the
42 not yet meeting expectations and partially meeting expectations
43 categories on the corresponding Statewide assessments.

44 “Program participant” means a person who is employed on the
45 effective date of this act or is initially hired following the effective
46 date of this act by a school district, charter school, or renaissance
47 school to fill a role requiring a bilingual or English as a second
48 language endorsement and who meets the criteria of section 2 of

1 this act, and who has executed a contract with the Higher Education
2 Student Assistance Authority for participation in the loan
3 redemption program. A program participant shall be a resident of
4 New Jersey.

5 “School district” means a local or regional school district
6 established pursuant to chapter 8 or chapter 13 of Title 18A of the
7 New Jersey Statutes, a county vocational school district established
8 pursuant to article 3 of chapter 54 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
9 Statutes, and a school district under full State intervention pursuant
10 to P.L.1987, c.399 (C.18A:7A-34 et seq.).

11

12 2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student
13 Assistance Authority a loan redemption program for public school
14 teachers who teach in a bilingual education or English as a second
15 language program. The program shall provide for the redemption
16 of eligible student loan expenses of a program participant following
17 the fourth consecutive year of full-time employment as a teacher in
18 a bilingual education or English as a second language program in a
19 public school in which at least 10 percent of the students are
20 enrolled in a bilingual education or English as a second language
21 program. The authority shall give priority under the program to
22 teachers who are employed at a low performing public school.

23 b. A program participant may redeem eligible student loan
24 expenses upon execution of a contract between the program
25 participant and the authority. The contract shall specify the total
26 amount of debt to be redeemed by the State in return for service
27 pursuant to subsection c. of this section. A program participant
28 who has entered into a contract with the authority shall remain
29 eligible for loan redemption under the contract in the event that the
30 number of students enrolled in a bilingual education or English as a
31 second language program falls below 10 percent of total enrollment
32 at the public school in which the teacher is employed or the teacher
33 is transferred to a school in the district that does not meet the
34 enrollment requirements. A program participant who has entered
35 into a contract with the authority shall remain eligible for loan
36 redemption under the contract in the event that the public school in
37 which the teacher is employed loses its designation as a low
38 performing public school or the teacher is transferred to a school in
39 the district that is not a low performing public school.

40 c. The redemption of loans under the loan redemption program
41 shall equal 25 percent of the participant’s eligible student loan
42 expenses, up to \$5,000, in return for each consecutive year of full-
43 time employment as a teacher in a bilingual education or English as
44 a second language program in a public school. The total amount of
45 eligible student loan expenses which may be redeemed under the
46 program by a program participant, for four full school years of
47 service, shall not exceed \$20,000. A program participant shall
48 submit to the authority proof of eligible employment in a public

1 school prior to redemption of loan indebtedness. A program
2 participant is not required to teach at the same public school for
3 four consecutive years.

4 d. A program participant who has entered into a redemption
5 contract with the authority may nullify the contract by submitting
6 written notification to the authority and assuming full responsibility
7 for repayment of principal and interest on the full amount of his
8 loans or that portion of the loans which has not been redeemed by
9 the State in return for fulfillment of the contract.

10 e. In the case of the program participant's death or total and
11 permanent disability, the authority shall nullify the service
12 obligation of the program participant. The nullification shall
13 terminate the authority's obligations under the loan redemption
14 contract. If continued enforcement of the contract results in
15 extreme hardship, the authority may nullify or suspend the service
16 obligation of the program participant.

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18 3. The authority shall annually post in a prominent location on
19 its Internet website a list of low-performing schools at which a
20 public school teacher may be employed in order to qualify for loan
21 redemption under the loan redemption program established pursuant
22 to this act.

23

24 4. The authority shall annually submit a report on the loan
25 redemption program established pursuant to this act to the
26 Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
27 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The report shall be submitted no later than
28 August 1 of each year and shall include, but not be limited to, the
29 total number of participants receiving loan redemption under the
30 program, the total number of participants who withdrew from the
31 program or failed to complete the program's employment
32 requirement, and the effect of the program on filling vacant
33 teaching positions in a bilingual education or English as a second
34 language program.

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36 5. The authority shall adopt, in accordance with the
37 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
38 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
39 provisions of this act.

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41 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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46 The bill establishes a loan redemption program in the Higher
47 Education Student Assistance Authority for teachers who teach in a

1 bilingual education or English as a second language program at
2 public schools.

3 Under the bill, a program participant must be a resident of New
4 Jersey and execute a contract with the authority. The authority will
5 give priority under the program to teachers who are employed at a
6 low performing public school, including a charter school or a
7 renaissance school. The redemption of loans under the program
8 will equal 25 percent of the participant's eligible student loan
9 expenses, up to \$5,000, in return for each consecutive year of full-
10 time employment as a teacher who teaches in a bilingual education
11 or English as a second language program at a public school in
12 which at least 10 percent of the students are enrolled in a bilingual
13 education or English as a second language program. The total
14 amount of eligible student loan expenses that would be redeemed
15 under the program by a program participant, for four full school
16 years of service, will not exceed \$20,000. A program participant
17 would not be required to teach at the same public school for four
18 consecutive years.

19 The bill directs the authority to annually post in a prominent
20 location on its Internet website a list of low-performing schools at
21 which a public school teacher may be employed in order to qualify
22 for loan redemption under the bill.

23 A program participant who has entered into a redemption
24 contract with the authority may nullify the contract by submitting
25 written notification to the authority and assuming full responsibility
26 for repayment of principal and interest on the full amount of his
27 loans or that portion of the loans which has not been redeemed by
28 the State in return for fulfillment of the contract. In the event of a
29 program participant's death or total and permanent disability, the
30 authority will nullify the service obligation of the program
31 participant. The nullification will terminate the authority's
32 obligations under the loan redemption contract.

33 The authority will annually submit a report on the loan
34 redemption program to the Governor and the Legislature no later
35 than August 1 of each year. The report will include, but not be
36 limited to, the total number of participants receiving loan
37 redemption under the program, the total number of participants who
38 withdrew from the program or failed to complete the program's
39 employment requirement, and the effect of the program on filling
40 vacant teaching positions in a bilingual education or English as a
41 second language program.