SENATE, No. 4073

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 8, 2021

Sponsored by:
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex)
Senator JAMES BEACH
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senator Turner

SYNOPSIS

Provides supplemental appropriation of $20 million for loan redemption program and tuition reimbursement program for certain teachers of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/8/2021)

A SUPPLEMENT to the annual appropriations act for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, P.L.2021, c.133.

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

1. In addition to the amounts appropriated under P.L.2021, c.133, the annual appropriations act for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, there is appropriated from the General Fund the following amount for the purpose specified:

74 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

30 Educational, Cultural, and Intellectual Development
36 Higher Educational Services
2405 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority

GRANTS-IN-AID

45-2405 Student Assistance Programs $20,000,000
Total Grants-in-Aid appropriation,
Higher Educational Services $20,000,000

Grants-in-Aid:
45 STEM Teachers Loan Redemption Program
and Tuition Reimbursement Program
.....($20,000,000)

Notwithstanding any provision of P.L.2019, c.401 (C.18A:71C-74 et seq.) to the contrary, the amount hereinabove appropriated for STEM Teachers Loan Redemption Program and Tuition Reimbursement Program is appropriated for the purpose of providing loan redemption payments and tuition reimbursement payments to certain individuals who agree to teach science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) classes in New Jersey public schools for four full school years and who are completing certain educational degree requirements during the 2021-2022 academic year. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 2 of P.L.2019, c.401 (C.18A:71C-75) to the contrary, an individual shall be eligible for an upfront, lump sum payment providing for the redemption of all eligible student loan expenses as defined in section 1 of P.L.2019, c.401 (C.18A:71C-74) if the individual: is graduating from a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing educator preparation program in the 2021-2022 academic year and has been initially hired by a school district as a novice teacher to teach a STEM subject or is enrolled in a certificate of eligibility educator preparation program and has been initially hired as a novice teacher by a school district to teach a STEM subject; is eligible pursuant to

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

State Board of Education regulations to teach a STEM subject in a New Jersey public school immediately following graduation from a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing educator preparation program or while enrolled in a certificate of eligibility educator preparation program; and executes a contract with the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in which the individual agrees to teach STEM classes at a public school in New Jersey for four full school years following acceptance into the program. A contract executed for the redemption of loans shall specify: the program participant's dates of required service; the total amount of student loan debt to be redeemed by the State; and performance standards established by the authority for the program participant to adhere to in the participant’s course of service, which performance standards shall include maintaining an appropriate certificate to teach in the State and reporting to the authority on a form and in a manner prescribed by the authority, and attested to by the public school, on the program participant's performance of teaching services rendered. The contract shall also stipulate that, in the event that a program participant does not complete four full school years of service or otherwise violates any other provision of the contract relating to service requirements in exchange for loan redemption, the loan redemption provided to the participant shall be paid back to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority as a loan, subject to terms and conditions to be prescribed by the authority. The redemption of loans shall equal 25 percent of the participant's eligible student loan expenses, but the redemption of loans shall not exceed $20,000. The redemption of loans shall be issued to an eligible individual as an upfront, lump sum payment. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 6 of P.L.2019, c.401 (C.18A:71C-79) to the contrary, an individual shall be eligible for an upfront, lump sum payment providing for the reimbursement of all eligible tuition expenses as defined in section 4 of P.L.2019, c.401 (C.18A:71C-77) if the individual: is graduating in the 2021-2022 academic year from a master's degree or Ph.D. program in STEM or is completing 30 credits in a coherent sequence of courses in STEM; is eligible pursuant to State Board of Education regulations to teach in New Jersey public schools immediately following graduation or completion; and executes a contract with the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in which the individual agrees to teach STEM classes at a public school in New Jersey for four full school years following graduation or completion of the required credits. A contract executed for the reimbursement of tuition shall specify: the program participant's dates of required service; the total amount of reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses to be received by the participant in return for service; and performance standards established by the authority for the

program participant to adhere to in the participant's course of service, which performance standards shall include maintaining an appropriate certificate to teach in the State, remaining current with payments on any student loans, and reporting to the authority on a form and in a manner prescribed by the authority, and attested to by the public school, on the program participant's performance of teaching services rendered. The contract shall also stipulate that, in the event that a program participant does not complete four full years of service or otherwise violates any other provisions of the contract relating to service requirements in exchange for tuition reimbursement, the tuition reimbursement provided to the participant shall be paid back to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority as a loan, subject to terms and conditions to be set by the authority. The reimbursement of tuition shall equal 25 percent of the participant's eligible tuition expenses, but the reimbursement of tuition shall not exceed $20,000. The reimbursement of tuition shall be issued to an eligible individual as an upfront, lump sum payment.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill provides a supplemental appropriation totaling $20 million for a modified version of the loan redemption program and tuition reimbursement program established for certain teachers of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) established under P.L.2019, c.401.

Under this bill, an individual would be eligible for loan redemption or tuition reimbursement if that person:

- in the case of the loan redemption program, is graduating from a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing educator preparation program in the 2021-2022 academic year and has been initially hired by a school district as a novice teacher to teach a STEM subject or is enrolled in a certificate of eligibility educator preparation program and has been initially hired by a school district as a novice teacher to teach a STEM subject. In the case of the tuition reimbursement program, an individual is required to be graduating in the 2021-2022 academic year from a master's degree or Ph.D. program in STEM or is completing 30 credits in a coherent sequence of courses in STEM;
- is eligible pursuant to State Board of Education regulations to teach a STEM subject in a New Jersey public school; and
- executes a contract with the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in which the individual agrees to teach

STEM classes at a public school in New Jersey for four full school years.

A contract executed for the redemption of loans or the reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses would specify: the program participant's dates of required service; the total amount of student loan debt to be redeemed by the State or the total amount of reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses to be received by a program participant; and certain performance standards established by the authority for the program participant to adhere to in the participant’s course of service. A contract would also stipulate that, in the event that a program participant does not complete four full school years of service or otherwise violates any other provisions of the contract relating to service requirements, the loan redemption or tuition reimbursement payment provided to the participant would be paid back to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority as a loan.

The amount of loan redemption or tuition reimbursement for a program participant would equal 25 percent of the participant's eligible student loan or tuition expenses. The loan redemption or tuition reimbursement payments, however, would not exceed $20,000 for any eligible individual. The bill stipulates that the loan redemption and tuition reimbursement payments would be issued as upfront, lump sum payments.