

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 4073

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 8, 2021

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 4073.

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.