

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 211

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER

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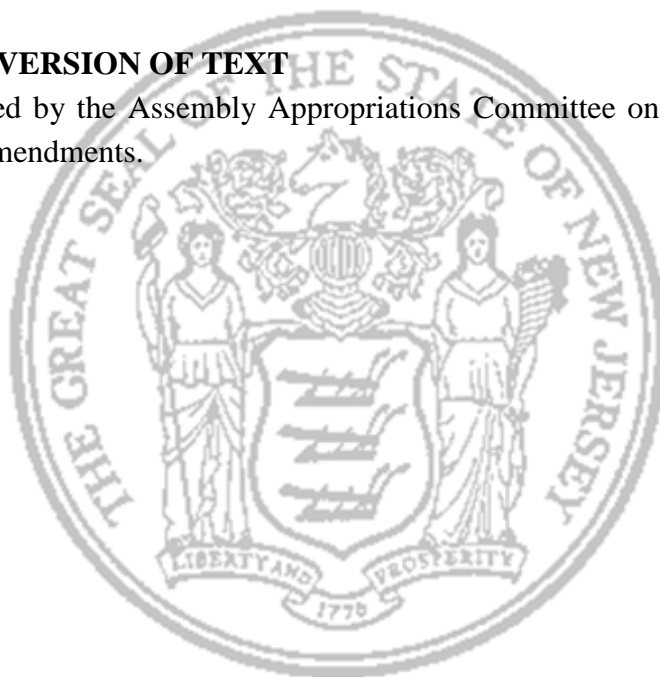
Assemblywoman Lampitt, Assemblymen Armato and Mazzeo

SYNOPSIS

Establishes loan redemption program and tuition reimbursement program for certain teachers of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on December 12, 2019, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/14/2020)

1 AN ACT establishing a loan redemption program ¹and a tuition
2 reimbursement program¹ for certain public school teachers and
3 supplementing chapter 71C of Title 18A of the New Jersey
4 Statutes.

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

8
9 1. As used in ¹section 2 of¹ this act:

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

12 “Eligible student loan expenses” means ¹["\$9,000 or"]¹
13 the outstanding balance of the principal and interest due on student
14 loans ¹["], whichever is less,¹ used to cover the cost of attendance
15 while enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at
16 an institution of higher education.

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

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

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

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

42 “Program participant” means a person who is initially hired by a
43 school district following the effective date of this act and who
44 meets the criteria of ¹["subsection a. of"]¹ section 2 of this act, and

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.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted December 12, 2019.

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

4 ¹“Public school” means a school located in New Jersey, under
5 collegiate grade, which is operated by a school district or a charter
6 school established pursuant to P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-
7 1 et seq.).¹

8 “School district” means a local or regional school district
9 established pursuant to chapter 8 or chapter 13 of Title 18A of the
10 New Jersey Statutes, ¹“a county special services school district
11 established pursuant to article 8 of chapter 46 of Title 18A of the
12 New Jersey Statutes,”¹ a county vocational school district
13 established pursuant to article 3 of chapter 54 of Title 18A of the
14 New Jersey Statutes, and a school district under full State
15 intervention pursuant to P.L.1987, c.399 (C.18A:7A-34 et seq.).
16

17 2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student
18 Assistance Authority a loan redemption program for public school
19 teachers who ¹“meet the following criteria:

20 (1) graduated in the top 20% of the student’s high school
21 graduating class or scored in the top 20% on the Scholastic
22 Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT)
23 examination;

24 (2) graduated from an institution of higher education with a
25 grade point average of at least 3.5; and

26 (3) teaches¹ teach¹ science, technology, engineering or
27 mathematics (STEM) classes ¹“or special education”¹.

28 The program shall provide for the redemption of the eligible
29 student loan expenses of a program participant following the
30 ¹“third” fourth¹ consecutive year of full-time employment as a
31 teacher of science, technology, engineering, ¹or¹ mathematics ¹“or
32 special education”¹ in a public school. ¹The annual amount of State
33 funds appropriated to the loan redemption program shall not exceed
34 \$500,000. The authority shall notify the Legislature when the funds
35 have been fully expended or committed.

36 The authority shall give priority under the program to teachers of
37 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics who are employed
38 at a low performing public school.¹

39 b. A program participant may redeem eligible student loan
40 expenses upon execution of a contract between the program
41 participant and the authority. The contract shall specify the total
42 amount of debt to be redeemed by the State in return for service
43 pursuant to subsection c. of this section. ¹A program participant
44 who has entered into a contract with the authority shall remain
45 eligible for loan redemption under the contract in the event that the
46 public school in which the teacher is employed loses its designation

1 as a low performing school or the teacher is transferred to a school
2 in the district that is not a low performing school.¹

3 c. The redemption of loans under the loan redemption program
4 shall ¹amount to \$9,000 or the outstanding balance of the principal
5 and interest of eligible student loan expenses, whichever is less,
6 following the third¹ equal 25 percent of the participant's eligible
7 student loan expenses, up to \$5,000, in return for each¹ consecutive
8 year of full-time employment as a teacher of science, technology,
9 engineering, ¹or¹ mathematics ¹for special education¹ in a public
10 school. ¹The total amount of eligible student loan expenses which
11 may be redeemed under the program by a program participant, for
12 four full school years of service, shall not exceed \$20,000.¹ A
13 program participant shall submit to the authority proof of eligible
14 employment in a public school prior to redemption of loan
15 indebtedness. A program participant is not required to teach at the
16 same public school for ¹three¹ four¹ consecutive years.

17 d. A program participant who has entered into a redemption
18 contract with the authority may nullify the contract by submitting
19 written notification to the authority and assuming full responsibility
20 for repayment of principal and interest on the full amount of his
21 loans or that portion of the loans which has not been redeemed by
22 the State in return for fulfillment of the contract.

23 e. In the case of the program participant's death or total and
24 permanent disability, the authority shall nullify the service
25 obligation of the program participant. The nullification shall
26 terminate the authority's obligations under the loan redemption
27 contract. If continued enforcement of the contract results in
28 extreme hardship, the authority may nullify or suspend the service
29 obligation of the program participant.

30 ¹f. The authority shall advertise the availability of the program
31 and engage in outreach activities with potential participants.¹

32
33 3. The authority shall annually submit a report on the ¹loan
34 redemption¹ program ¹established pursuant to section 2 of this act¹
35 to the Governor ¹,¹ and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of
36 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The report shall be submitted no
37 later than ¹August 1 of each year and shall include, but not be
38 limited to, information on the total number of participants receiving
39 loan redemption under the program, the impact of the program on
40 attracting teachers to teach STEM subjects or special education, and
41 the number of participants who withdrew from the program prior to
42 the completion of the required service¹ July 1 of each year and shall
43 include, but not be limited to, information on: the total number of
44 program participants; the number of program participants entering
45 the program in that year; a profile of the program participants,
46 including demographic information, the school district in which the

1 participant is employed and the school in which the participant
2 teaches, and the institution of higher education from which the
3 participant received a degree; the average annual loan redemption
4 amount and the four-year average loan redemption amount of
5 program participants; the number of applicants who were denied
6 acceptance into the program, including the number who were
7 denied due to a lack of program funding; and the amount of the
8 annual appropriation used to administer the program¹.

9
10 ¹4. As used in sections 5 through 8 of this act:

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

13 “Eligible tuition expenses” means tuition expenses that were
14 incurred by a program participant in attending an accredited
15 master’s degree or Ph.D. program in science, technology,
16 engineering, or mathematics or that were incurred by a program
17 participant in the completion of 30 credits in a coherent sequence of
18 courses in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, and
19 which were not covered by any grants or scholarships.

20 “Program” means the tuition reimbursement program established
21 pursuant to section 5 of this act for teachers who acquire a master’s
22 degree or Ph.D. in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics
23 or who complete 30 credits in a coherent sequence of courses in
24 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

25 “Program participant” means a teacher who contracts with the
26 authority to teach STEM classes in a public school following the
27 completion of a master’s degree or Ph.D. program in science,
28 technology, engineering, or mathematics or following the
29 completion of 30 credits in a coherent sequence of courses in
30 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, in return for
31 tuition reimbursement provided under the program.¹

32
33 ¹5. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student
34 Assistance Authority a tuition reimbursement program for teachers
35 of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) in the
36 State. The program shall provide reimbursement for a portion of
37 the eligible tuition expenses incurred by the participant in
38 completing a master’s degree or Ph.D. program in science,
39 technology, engineering, or mathematics or in completing 30 credits
40 in a coherent sequence of courses in science, technology,
41 engineering, or mathematics. The annual amount of State funds
42 appropriated to the tuition reimbursement program shall not exceed
43 \$500,000. The authority shall notify the Legislature when the funds
44 have been fully expended or committed.

45 b. A program participant shall enter into a contract with the
46 authority for a specified four-year period of service in which the
47 participant agrees to teach STEM classes in a public school in the
48 State following the participant’s completion of a master’s degree or

1 Ph.D. program in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics
2 or the completion of 30 credits in a coherent sequence of courses in
3 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. The agreement
4 shall specify the program participant's dates of required service and
5 the total amount of reimbursement of eligible tuition expenses to be
6 received by the participant in return for service.

7 c. The tuition reimbursement for a program participant shall
8 equal 25 percent of the participant's eligible tuition expenses, up to
9 \$5,000, in return for each full school year of teaching STEM classes
10 under the program. The total tuition reimbursement amount for a
11 program participant, for four full school years of service, shall not
12 exceed \$20,000 of the participant's eligible tuition expenses. A
13 teacher shall be required to complete four full school years of
14 service in order to be eligible to receive tuition reimbursement
15 under the program.

16 d. The authority shall advertise the availability of the program
17 and engage in outreach activities with potential participants.¹
18

19 ¹6. To be eligible to participate in the tuition reimbursement
20 program established pursuant to section 5 of this act, an applicant
21 shall:

22 a. hold a bachelor's degree;
23 b. have successfully completed, or be enrolled in, a master's
24 degree or Ph.D. program in science, technology, engineering, or
25 mathematics or have successfully completed, or be enrolled in, 30
26 credits in a coherent sequence of courses in science, technology,
27 engineering, or mathematics;

28 c. apply for the tuition reimbursement program within one year
29 of completing a master's degree or Ph.D. program or 30 credits in a
30 coherent sequence of courses in science, technology, engineering,
31 or mathematics; and

32 d. agree to teach STEM classes at a public school in New
33 Jersey for four full school years in return for the tuition
34 reimbursement provided under the program.¹
35

36 ¹7. A program participant, as a condition of participation, shall
37 be required to adhere to performance standards established by the
38 authority. The standards shall include, but not be limited to,
39 requirements that a program participant:

40 a. maintains an appropriate certificate to teach in the State;

41 b. remains current with payments on any student loans; and

42 c. reports to the authority on a form and in a manner prescribed
43 by the authority, and attested to by the public school, on the
44 program participant's performance of teaching services rendered
45 prior to reimbursement of tuition under the program.¹

1 ¹8. The authority shall annually submit a report on the tuition
2 reimbursement program established pursuant to section 5 of this act
3 to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of
4 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The report shall be submitted no
5 later than July 1 of each year and shall include, but not be limited
6 to, information on: the total number of program participants; the
7 number of program participants entering the program in that year; a
8 profile of the program participants, including demographic
9 information, the school district in which the participant is employed
10 and the school in which the participant teaches, and the institution
11 of higher education from which the participant received a degree;
12 the average annual tuition reimbursement amount and the four-year
13 average tuition reimbursement amount of program participants; and
14 the number of applicants who were denied acceptance into the
15 program, including the number who were denied due to a lack of
16 program funding.¹

17
18 ¹**[4.] 9.**¹ The authority, in consultation with the Department of
19 Education, shall adopt pursuant to the provisions of the
20 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-
21 1 et seq.), rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the purposes
22 of this act.

23

24 ¹**[5.] 10.**¹ This act shall take effect immediately.