

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3681

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 19, 2022

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3681 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the New Jersey Educator Scholarship Program in the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA), in coordination with the Department of Education. The purpose of the scholarship program is to provide incentives for students to pursue careers in education.

Scholarships will be awarded by HESAA to 50 students enrolled in approved programs of study at a public institution of higher education within the State. Each student will receive a scholarship in an amount up to the amount of tuition for each semester of study and an annual stipend of \$5,000 for four years of study or until the student receives a bachelor's degree and completes an educator preparation program, whichever occurs first. Within the first five full years after graduation, the student is required to seek and accept full time employment as a teaching staff member with a public school district in the State and the student will serve in employment with a public school district in the State for no less than three full school years, during which time they will receive mentoring to aid the student in furthering a career in education.

In order to be eligible for a scholarship under the program, a student is required to be a United States citizen or permanent resident alien, a resident of the State of New Jersey, and enrolled in an approved program of study at a public institution of higher education in the State. HESAA may establish additional eligibility requirements and minimum qualifications, and will determine an application and evaluation process for scholarship candidates. A student's scholarship will remain in effect provided that the student achieves satisfactory academic progress and continues to meet eligibility requirements. The scholarship will not remain in effect for a student who: is dismissed from the program of study for academic or disciplinary reasons, is disqualified from employment by a school district due to the detection of criminal history record information under current law, becomes ineligible to receive a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing for any other

reason, does not receive a degree within the first four years of the scholarship, withdraws from the program of study due to illness or a family emergency, or does not complete the required three full years of employment in a public school district within five years of receiving a bachelor's degree. Under certain circumstances, a student whose scholarship has been terminated may be required to repay all or part of the amount of any scholarship or stipend received as a debt to the State.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- house the program within the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, in coordination with the Department of Education;
- remove reference to high-achieving students;
- revise all references to tuition waiver to scholarship, so that a student shall receive a scholarship in an amount up to the amount of tuition;
- stipulate that eligible students are required to be enrolled in a public institution of higher education;
- allow any student eligible to complete the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application to apply to participate in the program;
- allow HESAA to limit eligibility to students seeking degrees in certain high demand subject areas; and
- provide that the State will appropriate funds to finance scholarships, in addition to stipends, for participating students.