

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3681

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 23, 2023

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments, Assembly Bill No. 3681 (1R).

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 each of the first, second, third, and fourth years of study in an educator preparation programs at a public institution of higher education within the State. Each student would receive a scholarship in an amount up to the remaining amount of tuition that is not covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit scholarship, for up to 18 credits for each semester of study. A scholarship, however, would not exceed the average in-State tuition amount charged by the four-year public institutions of higher education in the academic year in which the scholarship is awarded. A student would also receive an annual stipend of \$5,000 annually. A student would be eligible for the scholarship and stipend for four years of study or until the student receives a bachelor's degree and completes an educator preparation program, whichever occurs first.

The bill requires, within the first five full years after graduation, a student scholarship recipient to seek and accept full time employment as a teaching staff member with a public school district, charter school, or renaissance school in the State. The student would serve in employment with a public school for no less than three full school years, during which time the student would receive mentoring coordinated by the school in consultation with the Department of Education.

In order to be eligible for a scholarship under the program, a student is required to be a United States citizen, an eligible noncitizen, or meet certain other statutory requirements to be eligible for State financial aid, be 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. The scholarship would 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 as a debt to the State all or part of the amount of any stipend and the value of any scholarship received during the scholarship.

The bill appropriates \$3,000,000 to effectuate the purposes of the bill, and provides for an appropriation of \$4,000,000 in fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- clarify the amount of scholarships to be awarded;
- provide that the scholarship may be in an amount up to the remaining amount of tuition that is not covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit scholarship, up to 18 credits for each semester of study;
- provide that the amount of a scholarship would not exceed the average in-State tuition amount charged by the four-year public institutions of higher education in the academic year in which the scholarship is awarded;
- permit a student who received a scholarship under the program to seek and accept full time employment as a teaching staff member in a charter school or renaissance school, in addition to a public school district, as a requirement for the receipt of the scholarship;
- require a hiring district or school to provide mentoring in consultation with the Department of Education, in addition to any current minimum requirements for mentoring established pursuant to State law or regulation;
- provide that a student is required to be a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen or meet certain other statutory requirements to be eligible for State financial aid;
- change references to approved programs of study to educator preparation programs;

- remove the provision that the Board of Examiners may take disciplinary action against a student who fails to make repayment upon failure to complete the required three years of employment;
- make an appropriation of \$3,000,000 in fiscal year 2023; and
- provide for a \$4,000,000 appropriation in fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information for this bill is currently unavailable.