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SYNOPSIS
Establishes New Jersey Student Teacher Scholarship.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As reported by the Senate Education Committee on November 27, 2023, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/20/2023)
AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Student Educator Stipend Program and supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. As used in this act:
   “Approved program of study” means an undergraduate program leading to a bachelor’s degree offered by a four-year public institution of higher education; a post-baccalaureate program; or a graduate program leading to a master’s degree offered by a public institution of higher education in the State.
   “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.
   “Certificate of eligibility with advanced standing” means an instructional certificate with lifetime validity issued by the State Board of Examiners to candidates who meet degree, academic, and test requirements for teacher certification and complete an educator preparation program.
   “Clinical practice” means the culminating field-based experience or internship required by an educator preparation program.
   “Eligible student” means a student completing a required clinical practice through a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing educator preparation program at a public institution of higher education.
   “Program” means the New Jersey Student Educator Stipend Student Teacher Scholarship Program.

2. a. There is established in the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, in coordination with the Department of Education, the New Jersey Student Teacher Scholarship Program. The purpose of the program shall be to reduce financial barriers to teacher certification.
   b. Under the program, the authority shall award stipends to eligible students for each semester of full-time clinical practice completed by a student in a school in the State.
   Students shall be awarded a stipend scholarship in the amount of not to exceed $7,200 for each semester of full-time clinical practice completed by a student. The executive director of the authority may increase the maximum award amount established pursuant to this section to include a cost of living adjustment.

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:
Senate SED committee amendments adopted November 27, 2023.
student shall be eligible to receive a stipend scholarship under the program for a maximum of two academic semesters.

3. a. To be eligible for a stipend scholarship under the program, an applicant shall:

(1) be a United States citizen, permanent resident alien, or any student eligible to complete the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application;

(2) be a resident of the State;

(3) be enrolled on a full-time basis in an approved program of study; and

(4) complete any steps required by the approved program to be eligible to apply for clinical practice.

b. The authority, in coordination with the department, may establish additional eligibility requirements and minimum qualifications for the program, including limiting the program to students seeking degrees in math, science, special education, world languages, bilingual education, or other subjects determined to be in high demand for educators by the department.

c. A student’s stipend scholarship shall continue only during the period the student achieves satisfactory academic progress and remains in good academic standing as defined by the institution and continues to meet the eligibility and minimum qualifications established pursuant to subsections a. and b. of this section.

d. (1) The stipend scholarship shall be terminated if a student is dismissed from the institution of higher education or educator preparation program for academic or disciplinary reasons, is disqualified from employment by a school district due to the detection of criminal history record information pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1986, c.116 (C.18A:6-7.1), or otherwise becomes ineligible to receive a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing from the Board of Examiners, and the student shall be required to repay the full amount of any stipend received under the program as a debt to the State.

(2) The stipend scholarship shall be terminated if a student withdraws from an approved program of study due to the student’s illness, the illness of a member of the student’s immediate family, or a family emergency, but the student shall not be required to repay the amount of any stipend scholarship received under the program.

4. Within 90 days of the effective date of this act, the authority shall establish an application process to provide stipends to eligible students under the New Jersey Student Educator Stipend Scholarship Program established pursuant to section 2 of this act. No later than the first
day of the fourth month next following the effective date of this act, the authority shall make the application available, and shall, within a reasonable time frame thereafter, commence approving applications for the program.

5. The authority, in coordination with the Department of Education, shall annually collect data to measure the effectiveness of the program, which shall include, but not be limited to:
   a. the total number of program participants, disaggregated by certificate of eligibility with advanced standing educator preparation program;
   b. a survey of program participants to measure the participant’s experience with the [stipend] program; and
   c. the demographic data of each program participant, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender.

6. Nothing in this act shall be construed to exempt a student from meeting educator certification requirements in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.

7. The Legislature shall annually appropriate from the General Fund to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority amounts as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

8. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full academic year following the date of enactment.