

By: Senator(s) Tollison

To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2926

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-55, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE CONTINUATION OF THE CRITICAL NEEDS TEACHER
3 FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM AS A FOUR-YEAR REPAYMENT PROGRAM AND TO
4 ALLOW APPLICANTS TO RESIDE OR BE EMPLOYED IN ANY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA
5 OF THE STATE UNDER A SEVEN-YEAR REPAYMENT PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED
6 PURPOSES.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

8 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-55, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
9 amended as follows:

10 37-106-55. (1) There is established the "Critical Needs
11 Teacher Forgivable Loan Program," the purpose of which is to
12 attract qualified teachers to those geographical areas of the
13 state and those subject areas of the curriculum where there exists
14 a critical shortage of teachers by awarding forgivable loans to
15 persons declaring an intention to serve in the teaching field who
16 actually render service to the state while possessing an
17 appropriate teaching license.

18 (2) * * * The Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship
19 Program * * * is hereby continued for applicants after the * * *
20 2017-2018 academic year, and in subsequent years * * * subject to



21 appropriation therefor by the Legislature. Any individual who is
22 enrolled in or accepted for enrollment at a teacher education
23 program approved by the State Board of Education or other program
24 at a baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning
25 in the State of Mississippi and has a passing score on the Praxis
26 I Basic Skills Test who expresses in writing an intention to teach
27 in a geographical area of the state or a subject area of the
28 public school curriculum in which there exists a critical shortage
29 of teachers, as designated by the State Board of Education, shall
30 be eligible for a forgivable loan to be applied toward the costs
31 of the individual's college education. The annual amount of the
32 award shall be equal to the total cost for tuition, room and
33 meals, books, materials and fees at the college or university in
34 which the student is enrolled, not to exceed an amount equal to
35 the highest total cost of tuition, room and meals, books,
36 materials and fees assessed by a state institution of higher
37 learning during that school year. Awards made to nonresidents of
38 the state shall not include any amount assessed by the college or
39 university for out-of-state tuition.

40 (3) Awards granted under the Critical Needs Teacher
41 Forgivable Loan Program shall be available to both full-time and
42 part-time students. Students enrolling on a full-time basis may
43 receive a maximum of two (2) annual awards. The maximum number of
44 awards that may be made to students attending school on a
45 part-time basis, and the maximum time period for part-time



students to complete the number of academic hours necessary to obtain a baccalaureate degree in education, shall be established by rules and regulations promulgated by the board. Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loans shall not be based upon an applicant's financial need.

(4) Awards granted under the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program shall be made available to nontraditional licensed teachers showing a documented need for student loan repayment and employed in those school districts designated by the State Board of Education as a geographical area of the state or in a subject area of the curriculum in which there is a critical shortage of teachers. The maximum annual amount of this repayment should not exceed Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) and the maximum time period for repayment shall be no more than four (4) years.

(5) Except in those cases where employment positions may not be available upon completion of licensure requirements, at the beginning of the first school year in which a recipient of a Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan is eligible for employment as a licensed teacher or a nontraditional teacher intern pursuant to Section 37-3-2(6)(b), that person shall begin to render service as a licensed teacher or nontraditional teacher intern in a public school district in a geographical area of the state or a subject area of the curriculum where there is a critical shortage of teachers, as approved by the State Board of Education.



(6) Effective with the 2018-2019 academic year, any individual who is enrolled in or accepted for enrollment at a teacher education program approved by the State Board of Education or other program at a baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning in the State of Mississippi and has a passing score on the Praxis I Basic Skills Test who expresses in writing an intention to teach in any geographical area of the State of Mississippi shall be eligible for a forgivable loan to be applied toward the costs of the individual's college education under the same terms and conditions as prescribed for the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program under this section, with the exception that the maximum time period for repayment shall be no more than seven (7) years.

(* * *7) Failure to repay any loan and interest that becomes due shall be cause for the revocation of a person's teaching license by the State Board of Education.

(* * *8) Repayment and conversion terms shall be the same as those outlined in Section 37-106-53.

(* * *9) The board shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the proper administration of the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program and the Teacher Forgivable Loan Program authorized under subsection (6) of this section.

(* * *10) The State Board of Education shall compile and report, in consultation with the board, an annual report with findings and recommendations to the legislative committees on



education by December 1, * * * 2018, and annually thereafter, on the following:

(a) The number of participants in the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program, by institution and by freshman, sophomore, junior and senior level;

(b) The number of nontraditional teacher license program participants;

(c) The number of individuals who completed the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program and the program authorized in subsection (6) of this section and the school district in which they are employed;

(d) The number of individuals who are in default of their obligation under the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program and the status of their obligation;

(e) The number of participants in the program who have successfully completed the Praxis examination in their junior year; and

(f) The number of noneducation majors participating in the program.

(* * * 11) Where local school districts exhibit financial need, the State Department of Education may, subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature, provide financial assistance for the recruitment of certified teachers in an amount not to exceed Seventy-five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00) annually.



121 This section shall stand repealed July 1, 2020.

122 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
123 and after July 1, 2018.

