

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021**

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SENATE BILL 684

Short Title: Modify Teaching Fellows/CC Requirement. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Burgin and Corbin (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 8, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO MODIFY THE NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM TO
3 ALLOW STUDENTS TO PURSUE ANY AREA OF TEACHING LICENSURE TO BE
4 ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM, TO PRIORITIZE APPLICANTS WHO HAVE
5 ASSOCIATE DEGREES WITH A CONCENTRATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION,
6 AND TO CREATE A PRIORITY FOR FORGIVENESS FOR STUDENTS WHO ATTEND
7 A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A PARTICIPATING
8 INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION WHEN PURSUING TEACHER LICENSURE
9 OR WHO WORK IN A SCHOOL LOCATED IN A TIER ONE DEVELOPMENT AREA.

10 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

11 **SECTION 1.** Part 3 of Article 23 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes reads as
12 rewritten:

"Part 3. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

14 **"§ 116-209.60. Definitions.**

15 The following definitions apply in this Part:

- 16 (1) Commission. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission.
17 (2) Director. – The Director of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.
18 (3) Forgivable loan. – A forgivable loan made under the Program.
19 (4) Program. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.
20 (5) Public school. – An elementary or secondary school located in North Carolina
21 that is governed by a local board of education, charter school board of
22 directors, regional school board of directors, or University of North Carolina
23 laboratory school board of trustees.
24 (6) ~~STEM. – Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.~~
25 (7) Trust Fund. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program Trust Fund.

26 ...

27 **"§ 116-209.62. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program established; administration.**

28 (a) Program. – There is established the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program to be
29 administered by the System Office of The University of North Carolina, in conjunction with the
30 Authority and the Commission. The purpose of the Program is to recruit, prepare, and support
31 students residing in or attending institutions of higher education located in North Carolina for
32 preparation as highly effective ~~STEM or special education~~ teachers in the State's public schools.
33 The Program shall be used to provide a forgivable loan to individuals interested in preparing to
34 teach in the public schools of the ~~State in STEM or special education licensure areas.~~ State.

35 (b) Trust Fund. – There is established the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program
36 Trust Fund to be administered by the Authority, in conjunction with the System Office of The



1 University of North Carolina. All funds (i) appropriated to, or otherwise received by, the Program
2 for forgivable loans and other Program purposes, (ii) received as repayment of forgivable loans,
3 and (iii) earned as interest on these funds shall be placed in the Trust Fund. The purpose of the
4 Trust Fund is to provide financial assistance to qualified students for completion of teacher
5 education and licensure programs to ~~fill STEM or special education licensure areas~~ teach in the
6 public schools of the State.

7 (c) Uses of Monies in the Trust Fund. – The monies in the Trust Fund may be used only
8 for (i) forgivable loans granted under the Program, (ii) administrative costs associated with the
9 Program, including recruitment and recovery of funds advanced under the Program, (iii)
10 mentoring and coaching support to forgivable loan recipients, and (iv) extracurricular
11 enhancement activities of the Program in accordance with the following:

- 12 (1) The Authority shall transfer the greater of six hundred thousand dollars
13 (\$600,000) or ten percent (10%) of the available funds from the Trust Fund to
14 the ~~General Administration System Office~~ of The University of North
15 Carolina at the beginning of each fiscal year for the Program's administrative
16 costs, the salary of the Director of the Program and other Program staff,
17 expenses of the Commission, and to provide the Commission with funds to
18 use for the extracurricular enhancement activities of the Program.

19 ...

20 (d) Director of the Program. – The Board of Governors of The University of North
21 Carolina shall appoint a Director of the Program. The Director shall appoint staff to the
22 Commission and shall be responsible for recruitment and coordination of the Program, including
23 proactive, aggressive, and strategic recruitment of potential recipients. Recruitment activities
24 shall include (i) targeting regions of the State with the highest teacher attrition rates and teacher
25 recruitment challenges, (ii) actively engaging with educators, business leaders, experts in human
26 resources, elected officials, and other community leaders throughout the State, and (iii) attracting
27 candidates ~~in STEM and special education licensure areas~~ to the Program. The Director shall
28 report to the President of The University of North Carolina. The Authority shall provide office
29 space and clerical support staff, as necessary, to the Director for the Program.

30 (e) Student Selection Criteria for Forgivable Loans. – The Commission shall adopt
31 stringent standards for awarding forgivable loans based on multiple measures to ensure that only
32 the strongest applicants receive them, including the following:

- 33 (1) Grade point averages.
34 (2) Performance on relevant career and college readiness assessments.
35 (3) Experience, accomplishments, and other criteria demonstrating qualities
36 positively correlated with highly effective teachers, including excellent verbal
37 and communication skills.
38 (4) Demonstrated commitment to serve in a ~~STEM or special education licensure~~
39 ~~area~~ in North Carolina public schools.
40 (5) Priority for students who have demonstrated commitment towards achieving
41 licensure by completing associate degree programs with a concentration in
42 teacher education.

43 (f) Program Selection Criteria. – The Authority shall administer the Program in
44 cooperation with up to eight institutions of higher education with approved educator preparation
45 programs selected by the Commission that represent a diverse selection of both postsecondary
46 constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina and private postsecondary
47 institutions operating in the State. The Commission shall adopt stringent standards for selection
48 of the most effective educator preparation programs, including the following:

49 ...

- 1 (2) Demonstrates measurable impact of prior graduates on student ~~learning,~~
2 ~~including impact of graduates teaching in STEM or special education~~
3 ~~licensure areas.~~ learning.

4 ...

5 ~~(h) Identification of STEM and Special Education Licensure Areas. The Superintendent~~
6 ~~of Public Instruction shall identify and provide to the Commission and the Authority a list of~~
7 ~~STEM and special education licensure areas and shall annually provide to the Commission the~~
8 ~~number of available positions in each licensure area relative to the number of current and~~
9 ~~anticipated teachers in that area of licensure. The Commission shall make the list of STEM and~~
10 ~~special education licensure areas readily available to applicants.~~

11 ...

12 (j) Annual Report. – The Commission, in coordination with the Authority, the
13 Department of Public Instruction, and the selected educator education programs participating in
14 the Program shall report no later than January 1, ~~2019,~~ 2022, and annually thereafter, to the Joint
15 Legislative Education Oversight Committee regarding the following:

- 16 (1) Forgivable loans awarded from the Trust Fund, including the following:

- 17 a. Demographic information regarding recipients.
18 b. Number of recipients by institution of higher education and program.
19 e. ~~Information on number of recipients by anticipated STEM and special~~
20 ~~education licensure area.~~

- 21 (2) Placement and repayment rates, including the following:

- 22 a. Number of graduates who have been employed ~~in a STEM or special~~
23 ~~education licensure area~~ within two years of program completion.
24 b. Number of graduates who accepted employment at a low-performing
25 school identified under G.S. 115C-105.37 as part of their years of
26 service.
27 c. Number of graduates who have elected to do loan repayment and their
28 years of service, if any, prior to beginning loan repayment.
29 d. Number of graduates employed ~~in a STEM or special education~~
30 ~~licensure area~~ who have received an overall rating of at least
31 accomplished and have met expected growth on applicable standards
32 of the teacher evaluation instrument.
33 e. Aggregate information on student growth and proficiency in courses
34 taught by graduates who have fulfilled service ~~requirements through~~
35 ~~employment in a STEM or special education licensure~~
36 ~~area.~~ requirements.

- 37 (2a) Mentoring and coaching support through the North Carolina New Teacher
38 Support Program, including the following:

- 39 a. Number of forgivable loan recipients who received mentoring and
40 coaching support when employed at a low-performing school
41 identified under G.S. 115C-105.37.
42 b. Number of forgivable loan recipients who received mentoring and
43 coaching support when employed at a school not identified as
44 low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37.

- 45 (3) Selected school outcomes by program, including the following:

- 46 a. Turnover rate for forgivable loan graduates, including the turnover rate
47 for graduates who also received mentoring and coaching support
48 through the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program.
49 b. Aggregate information on student growth and proficiency as provided
50 annually by the State Board of Education to the Commission in courses
51 taught by forgivable loan graduates.

1 c. Fulfillment rate of forgivable loan graduates.

2 **"§ 116-209.63. Terms of forgivable loans; receipt and disbursement of funds.**

3 (a) Notes. – All forgivable loans shall be evidenced by notes made payable to the
4 Authority that bear interest at a rate not to exceed ten percent (10%) per year as set by the
5 Authority and beginning on the first day of September after the completion of the program
6 leading to teacher licensure or 90 days after graduation, whichever is later. If a forgivable loan is
7 terminated, the note shall be made payable to the Authority 90 days after termination of the
8 forgivable loan. The forgivable loan may be terminated upon the recipient's withdrawal from the
9 Program or by the recipient's failure to meet the standards set by the Commission.

10 (b) Forgiveness. – The Authority shall forgive the loan and any interest accrued on the
11 loan if, within 10 years after graduation from a program leading to teacher licensure, exclusive
12 of any authorized deferment for extenuating circumstances, the recipient serves as a teacher ~~in a~~
13 ~~STEM or special education licensure area, as provided in G.S. 116-209.62(h),~~ for every year the
14 teacher was awarded the forgivable loan, in any combination of the following:

15 (1) One year at a North Carolina public school if one of the following conditions
16 are met:

17 a. The school is identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37 at
18 the time the teacher accepts employment at the school or, if the teacher
19 changes employment during this period, at another school identified
20 as low-performing.

21 b. The recipient received an associate degree from a community college
22 that is in partnership with a participating institution of higher
23 education and serves at a public school located in the administrative
24 area of the community college in which the recipient received the
25 associate degree.

26 c. The school is located in a development tier one area, as defined in
27 G.S. 143B-437.08, at the time the teacher accepts employment at the
28 school.

29 (2) Two years at a North Carolina public school ~~not identified as low-performing~~
30 ~~under G.S. 115C-105.37~~ if none of the conditions set forth in subdivision (1)
31 of this subsection otherwise apply.

32 The Authority shall also forgive the loan if it finds that it is impossible for the recipient to
33 work for up to eight years, within 10 years after completion of the program leading to teacher
34 licensure, at a North Carolina public school because of the death or permanent disability of the
35 recipient. If the recipient repays the forgivable loan by cash payments, all indebtedness shall be
36 repaid within 10 years after completion of the program leading to teacher licensure supported by
37 the forgivable loan. If the recipient completes a program leading to teacher licensure, payment
38 of principal and interest shall begin no later than the first day of September after the completion
39 of the program. Should a recipient present extenuating circumstances, the Authority may extend
40 the period to repay the loan in cash to no more than a total of 12 years."

41 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2021, and applies to the award of
42 forgivable loans to a new cohort beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year.