

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE BILL 849

Short Title: Expand & Enhance the Teaching Fellows Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Ball, Elmore, von Haefen, and Longest (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 26, 2023

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE THE NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING FELLOWS
3 PROGRAM.

4 Whereas, the pursuit of teaching is the pursuit of excellence, and excellent teachers
5 are not just born, they are developed, equipped, trained, and valued; and

6 Whereas, all students in North Carolina deserve to be taught by excellent teachers;
7 and

8 Whereas, the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program has an important legacy in
9 North Carolina, providing the best and brightest students the opportunity to have a place of
10 influence and distinction by elevating them to a vital role – the role of a teacher; and

11 Whereas, based on the sorely inadequate and regularly declining enrollment in teacher
12 preparation programs and an accelerating teacher turnover rate, North Carolina is facing an
13 overwhelming teacher shortage across the State, especially in rural counties; and

14 Whereas, the teacher shortage is a growing crisis for our entire educational system as
15 well as the future of our State; and

16 Whereas, to solve this problem and provide stable, talented, motivated, and excellent
17 teachers in our classrooms, we need to continue to rebuild the North Carolina Teaching Fellows
18 Program; Now, therefore,

19 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

22 "Part 3. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

23 **"§ 116-209.60. Definitions.**

24 The following definitions apply in this Part:

- 25 (1) Commission. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission.
26 (2) Director. – The Director of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.
27 (3) Forgivable loan. – A forgivable loan made under the Program.
28 (4) Program. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.
29 (5) Public school. – An elementary or secondary school located in North Carolina
30 that is governed by a local board of education, charter school board of
31 directors, regional school board of directors, or University of North Carolina
32 laboratory school board of trustees.
33 ~~(6) STEM. – Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.~~
34 (7) Trust Fund. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program Trust Fund.

35 ...



1 **"§ 116-209.62. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program established; administration.**

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

9 (b) Trust Fund. – There is established the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program
10 Trust Fund to be administered by the Authority, in conjunction with the System Office of The
11 University of North Carolina. All funds (i) appropriated to, or otherwise received by, the Program
12 for forgivable loans and other Program purposes, (ii) received as repayment of forgivable loans,
13 and (iii) earned as interest on these funds shall be placed in the Trust Fund. The purpose of the
14 Trust Fund is to provide financial assistance to qualified students for completion of teacher
15 education and licensure programs to fill ~~STEM or special education licensure areas~~ positions in
16 the public schools of the State.

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

22 (1) The Authority shall transfer the ~~greater of six hundred thousand dollars~~
23 ~~(\$600,000) or ten percent (10%) following amounts~~ of the available funds
24 from the Trust Fund to the General Administration of The ~~University of North~~
25 ~~Carolina~~ University of North Carolina System Office at the beginning of each
26 fiscal ~~year~~ year:

27 a. The greater of six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) or ten percent
28 (10%) for the Program's administrative costs, the salary of the Director
29 of the Program and other Program staff, ~~expenses of the Commission,~~
30 and to provide the Commission with funds to use for the
31 extracurricular enhancement activities of the Program and expenses of
32 the Commission.

33 b. The sum of up to six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) for
34 extracurricular enhancement activities of the Program, including (i)
35 summer programs to maintain year-round connections and (ii) alumni
36 programs to foster continued engagement after graduation. These
37 activities should be geared to instilling a strong motivation not only to
38 remain in teaching but to provide leadership for tomorrow's schools.

39 c. The sum of up to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for the
40 Director of the Program to implement the recruitment activities
41 identified in subsection (d) of this section.

42 (2) The Authority may use the greater of two hundred fifty thousand dollars
43 (\$250,000) or four percent (4%) of the funds appropriated to the Trust Fund
44 each fiscal year for administrative costs associated with the Program.

45 (3) The Authority shall provide the Commission with up to six hundred thousand
46 dollars (\$600,000) from the Trust Fund in each fiscal year for the Commission
47 to provide mentoring and coaching support to forgivable loan recipients
48 through the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program in an amount of
49 up to two thousand two hundred dollars (\$2,200) for each Program recipient.
50 Funds shall be prioritized for teachers serving in North Carolina public
51 schools identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37.

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

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

14 (1) Grade point averages.

15 (2) Performance on relevant career and college readiness assessments.

16 (3) Experience, accomplishments, and other criteria demonstrating qualities
17 positively correlated with highly effective teachers, including excellent verbal
18 and communication skills.

19 (4) Demonstrated commitment to serve ~~in a STEM or special education licensure~~
20 ~~area~~ in North Carolina public schools.

21 (f) Program Selection Criteria. – The Authority shall administer the Program in
22 cooperation with each constituent institution of The University of North Carolina and up to eight
23 four institutions of higher education with approved educator preparation programs selected by
24 the Commission that represent a diverse selection of ~~both postsecondary constituent institutions~~
25 ~~of The University of North Carolina and~~ private postsecondary institutions operating in the State.
26 The Commission shall adopt stringent standards for selection of the most effective educator
27 preparation programs, including the following:

28 (1) Demonstrates high rates of educator effectiveness on value-added models and
29 teacher evaluations, including using performance-based, subject-specific
30 assessment and support systems, such as edTPA or other metrics of evaluating
31 candidate effectiveness that have predictive validity.

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

35 (3) Demonstrates high rates of graduates passing exams required for teacher
36 licensure.

37 (4) Provides curricular and co-curricular enhancements in leadership, facilitates
38 learning for diverse learners, and promotes community engagement,
39 classroom management, and reflection and assessment.

40 (5) Requires at least a minor concentration of study in the subject area that the
41 candidate may teach.

42 (6) Provides early and frequent internship or practical experiences, including the
43 opportunity for participants to perform practicums in diverse school
44 environments.

45 (7) Is approved by the State Board of Education as an educator preparation
46 program.

47 (g) Awards of Forgivable Loans. – The Program shall provide forgivable loans to selected
48 students to be used at each constituent institution of The University of North Carolina and up to
49 eight-four selected private institutions for completion of a program leading to initial teacher
50 licensure as follows:

- 1 (1) North Carolina high school seniors. – Forgivable loans of up to ~~four thousand~~
 2 ~~one hundred twenty five dollars (\$4,125)~~ six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per
 3 semester for up to eight semesters.
- 4 (2) Students applying for transfer to a selected educator preparation program at
 5 an institution of higher education. – Forgivable loans of up to ~~four thousand~~
 6 ~~one hundred twenty five dollars (\$4,125)~~ six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per
 7 semester for up to six semesters.
- 8 (3) Individuals currently holding a bachelor's degree seeking preparation for
 9 teacher licensure. – Forgivable loans of up to ~~four thousand one hundred~~
 10 ~~twenty five dollars (\$4,125)~~ six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per semester for up
 11 to four semesters.
- 12 (4) Students matriculating at institutions of higher education who are changing to
 13 an approved program of study at a selected educator preparation program. –
 14 Forgivable loans of up to ~~four thousand one hundred twenty five dollars~~
 15 ~~(\$4,125)~~ six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per semester for up to four semesters.

16 Forgivable loans may be used for tuition, fees, the cost of books, and expenses related to
 17 obtaining licensure.

18 ~~(h) Identification of STEM and Special Education Licensure Areas. The Superintendent~~
 19 ~~of Public Instruction shall identify and provide to the Commission and the Authority a list of~~
 20 ~~STEM and special education licensure areas and shall annually provide to the Commission the~~
 21 ~~number of available positions in each licensure area relative to the number of current and~~
 22 ~~anticipated teachers in that area of licensure. The Commission shall make the list of STEM and~~
 23 ~~special education licensure areas readily available to applicants.~~

24 ...

25 (j) Annual Report. – The Commission, in coordination with the Authority, the
 26 Department of Public Instruction, each constituent institution of The University of North
 27 Carolina, and the selected private educator education programs participating in the Program shall
 28 report no later than January 1, 2019, and annually thereafter, to the Joint Legislative Education
 29 Oversight Committee regarding the following:

- 30 (1) Forgivable loans awarded from the Trust Fund, including the following:
- 31 a. Demographic information regarding recipients.
 - 32 b. Number of recipients by institution of higher education and program.
 - 33 c. Information on number of recipients by ~~anticipated STEM and special~~
 34 ~~education~~ licensure area.
- 35 (2) Placement and repayment rates, including the following:
- 36 a. Number of graduates who have been employed ~~in a STEM or special~~
 37 ~~education licensure area~~ as a public school teacher in North Carolina
 38 within two years of program completion.
 - 39 b. Number of graduates who accepted employment at a low-performing
 40 school identified under G.S. 115C-105.37 as part of their years of
 41 service.
 - 42 c. Number of graduates who have elected to do loan repayment and their
 43 years of service, if any, prior to beginning loan repayment.
 - 44 d. Number of graduates employed in a ~~STEM or special education~~
 45 ~~licensure area~~ North Carolina public school who have received an
 46 overall rating of at least accomplished and have met expected growth
 47 on applicable standards of the teacher evaluation instrument.
 - 48 e. Aggregate information on student growth and proficiency in courses
 49 taught by graduates who have fulfilled service requirements through
 50 employment in a ~~STEM or special education licensure area~~ North
 51 Carolina public school.

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

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

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

- (1) ~~One year~~ Six months at a North Carolina public school identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37 at the time the teacher accepts employment at the school or, if the teacher changes employment during this period, at another school identified as low-performing.
- (2) ~~Two years~~ One year at a North Carolina public school not identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37.

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

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2023, and applies to applications for the award of funds beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year.