

1 HB261
2 189494-2
3 By Representatives Lovvorn and Poole
4 RFD: Ways and Means Education
5 First Read: 18-JAN-18

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ENROLLED, An Act,

To establish the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program to provide loan repayment awards to eligible public school teachers; to provide for administration by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education; to provide eligibility standards; to provide for the determination of qualified teacher shortage areas by the commission in consultation with the State Department of Education; and to amend Section 16-5-12, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide that the evaluation of the commission conducted every four years be based on a survey of certain specified entities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. The Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP) is created pursuant to Sections 2 to 6, inclusive, of this act.

Section 2. The purpose of the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP) is twofold:

(1) To encourage individuals to enroll in and complete programs leading to Alabama certification in mathematics or science.

(2) To improve the educational system in Alabama by encouraging those who complete the program to accept math or science teaching positions in Alabama public schools,

1 preferably in public school systems where the shortage of math
2 or science teachers, or both, is most acute.

3 Section 3. For the purposes of Sections 2 to 6,
4 inclusive, of this act, the following terms shall have the
5 following meanings:

6 (1) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A state-supported
7 institution of higher education or a private nonprofit
8 institution of higher education that satisfies all of the
9 following:

10 a. Is accredited by the Southern Association of
11 Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

12 b. Is approved by the State Board of Education or
13 the State Department of Education to prepare teachers of
14 secondary math or science, or both.

15 c. Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student
16 aid program funds.

17 d. Maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.

18 (2) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher
19 Education.

20 (3) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT. A person who satisfies the
21 criteria set out in Sections 2 to 6, inclusive, of this act
22 and is found to be eligible by rules adopted by the Alabama
23 Commission on Higher Education.

24 (4) PROGRAM. The Alabama Math and Science Teacher
25 Education Program created by Sections 2 to 6, inclusive, of

1 this act and administered by the commission that provides loan
2 repayments to a teacher with a valid Alabama professional
3 educator certificate endorsed in math or science, who teaches
4 math or science full-time in the Alabama public school system.

5 (5) SCIENCE. Biology, chemistry, physics, and
6 general science.

7 (6) YEAR. A school year that shall be divided into
8 fall and spring semesters. The term does not mean calendar,
9 fiscal, or scholastic year.

10 Section 4. (a) The Alabama Math and Science Teacher
11 Education Program shall be administered by the commission,
12 which may adopt any rules necessary for the administration of
13 the program.

14 (b) The commission shall adopt standards for
15 awarding loan repayments to an Alabama public school teacher
16 who satisfies all of the following:

17 (1) Has graduated from an approved institution.

18 (2) Holds a valid Alabama professional educator
19 certificate endorsed in math or science.

20 (3) Is teaching in an Alabama public school
21 full-time in the field of math or science.

22 (4) May be eligible to receive additional funds for
23 teaching math or science in a public school in a geographic
24 area with acute teacher shortages in math or science, or both.

1 Section 5. (a) To be eligible for the base program
2 of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per semester, an
3 applicant shall satisfy all of the following:

4 (1) Be a graduate of a State Board of Education or
5 State Department of Education approved program in math or
6 science, at the baccalaureate or master's level, from an
7 approved institution leading to an initial secondary
8 professional educator certificate endorsed in math or science.
9 A teacher who only earns a passing score on the Praxis test in
10 math or science to add a certificate endorsement for math or
11 science, and who has not completed an entire approved program,
12 does not satisfy this requirement.

13 (2) Holds a valid Alabama professional educator
14 certificate endorsed in secondary math or science, or both.

15 (3) Teaches math or science full-time in an Alabama
16 public school district.

17 (4) Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of
18 the United States.

19 (5) Has been a resident of Alabama for at least 12
20 months before the application deadline and provides
21 documentation proving a permanent connection to the State of
22 Alabama. The commission shall accept any one of the following
23 as proof of residency:

24 a. A current valid Alabama driver's license.

25 b. A current valid Alabama vehicle registration.

1 c. A current valid Alabama voter registration card.

2 (6) Has outstanding federal student loans,
3 subsidized or unsubsidized.

4 (7) Satisfies additional continuing eligibility
5 criteria established by the commission.

6 (b) In order to receive a supplement pursuant to
7 Sections 2 to 6, inclusive, of this act, in addition to the
8 criteria listed above, a recipient shall also teach math or
9 science, or both, in a geographic area within the state with
10 an acute teacher shortage in math or science, or both, as
11 identified by the commission in consultation with the State
12 Department of Education.

13 Section 6. (a) The program shall be used to provide
14 a loan repayment for federal student loans in the following
15 amounts:

16 (1) Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per year, or two
17 thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per semester worked,
18 for a maximum of four consecutive years for a teacher with a
19 valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in
20 secondary math or science who graduated from a teacher
21 education program at an approved institution after the 2018
22 spring semester term and is teaching in an Alabama public
23 school.

24 (2) An additional two thousand five hundred dollars
25 (\$2,500) per year, or one thousand two hundred fifty dollars

1 (\$1,250) per semester worked, for a maximum of four
2 consecutive years for a teacher who satisfies all criteria
3 listed in subsection (a) of Section 4 and who also is teaching
4 math or science in a public school in an area of the state
5 with acute teacher shortages in math or science, or both, in a
6 geographic area within the state with an acute teacher
7 shortage in math or science, or both, as identified by the
8 commission in consultation with the State Department of
9 Education.

10 (b) Loan repayment award recipients shall reapply
11 for the program annually.

12 (c) Loan repayment awards shall be distributed
13 directly to the recipient teacher in two disbursements during
14 the applicable year: One disbursement after January 1 and the
15 second disbursement after June 1. Each recipient shall provide
16 documentation from the employing school district as proof that
17 he or she has taught for a semester. If the award amount is
18 larger than the outstanding loan balance, the award amount
19 shall be reduced to the amount of the loan balance.

20 (d) The requirements of Sections 2 to 6, inclusive,
21 of this act are contingent upon available funding for the
22 program.

23 (e) The commission shall determine the necessary
24 procedures for awarding loan repayments if the number of
25 eligible applicants and recipients exceeds available funding.

1 (f) The recipient shall notify the commission in
2 writing of any change in status within 30 days after the
3 change. Failure to notify the commission of a change in status
4 shall affect future eligibility. All of the following
5 constitute a change in status:

6 (1) A change in name.

7 (2) A change in residence.

8 (3) A change in employment status.

9 (g) To receive a loan repayment check pursuant to
10 Sections 2 to 6, inclusive, of this act, a teacher shall
11 register online with the Comptroller.

12 (h) A loan repayment check is considered income by
13 the Internal Revenue Service, and recipients shall be made
14 aware of that fact.

15 (i) Any funds appropriated to the program shall be
16 nonreverting.

17 (j) Additional funds shall be made available to
18 teachers who also teach math or science in areas of the state
19 where the shortages of math or science teachers, or both, is
20 most severe. The commission, in consultation with the State
21 Department of Education, shall determine which school systems
22 in the state have the greatest shortage areas.

23 Section 7. Section 16-5-12 of the Code of Alabama
24 1975, is amended to read as follows:

25 "§16-5-12.

1 ~~"Two years after the establishment of the commission~~
2 ~~and during~~ During the last year of each gubernatorial term,
3 the commission shall appoint a committee of at least three
4 consultants who are not associated with higher education in
5 this state conduct a survey of members of the education
6 community, the Legislature, the Executive Branch of the state,
7 and business and industry to evaluate the effectiveness of the
8 work of the commission and to recommend changes as needed. A
9 report prepared by the committee, detailing the results of the
10 survey and any recommended changes, shall be submitted to the
11 Governor, the Legislature, the presidents and governing boards
12 of the public institutions of higher education of this state,
13 and the public."

14 Section 8. This act shall become effective on the
15 first day of the third month following its passage and
16 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

House of Representatives

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in
and was passed by the House 27-FEB-18.

Jeff Woodard
Clerk

Senate	22-MAR-18	Amended and Passed
House	28-MAR-18	Concurred in Senate Amendment