

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 792

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE LEWIS.

1776H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To repeal section 173.232, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to teacher recruitment and retention state scholarships.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Section 173.232, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 173.232, to read as follows:

173.232. 1. There is hereby established the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program", which shall be administered by the department of elementary and secondary education. The program shall, upon appropriation, provide scholarships, subject to the eligibility criteria enumerated in this section, for eligible students who enter a teacher education program and make a commitment to teach as a condition of receiving such scholarship.

2. (1) Subject to appropriation, each year the department of elementary and secondary education shall make available to eligible students scholarships for up to two years in an amount that encompasses up to one hundred percent of the total cost of eligible students' tuition costs **and educational costs** related to teacher preparation at a four-year college or university located in Missouri, except that no amount granted for tuition shall exceed the amount of tuition charged a Missouri resident at the University of Missouri-Columbia for attendance. Such amount shall be paid by funds appropriated to the department.

(2) The maximum number of scholarships made available or the maximum amount awarded annually under this section shall be as follows:

~~[(1)]~~ (a) For academic years ending before July 1, 2025, two hundred scholarships or a maximum awarded amount of one million two hundred thousand dollars;

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets ~~[thus]~~ in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

18 ~~[(2)]~~ **(b)** For the 2025-26 academic year, four hundred scholarships or a maximum
19 awarded amount of two million four hundred thousand dollars;

20 ~~[(3)]~~ **(c)** For the 2026-27 academic year, four hundred forty scholarships or a
21 maximum awarded amount of two million six hundred thousand dollars;

22 ~~[(4)]~~ **(d)** For the 2027-28 academic year, four hundred eighty scholarships or a
23 maximum awarded amount of two million eight hundred thousand dollars;

24 ~~[(5)]~~ **(e)** For the 2028-29 academic year, five hundred twenty scholarships or a
25 maximum awarded amount of three million dollars;

26 ~~[(6)]~~ **(f)** For the 2029-30 academic year, five hundred sixty scholarships or a
27 maximum awarded amount of three million two hundred thousand dollars; and

28 ~~[(7)]~~ **(g)** For the 2030-31 academic year and all subsequent academic years, six
29 hundred scholarships or a maximum awarded amount of three million four hundred thousand
30 dollars.

31 **(3) (a) If the number of scholarships or the maximum awarded amount in a**
32 **given academic year does not meet or exceed the limits listed in subdivision (2) of this**
33 **subsection, the department shall use such remaining moneys to award additional**
34 **scholarships for tuition costs and educational costs related to teacher preparation at a**
35 **four-year college or university located in Missouri to students who are in such students'**
36 **final semester of a state-approved baccalaureate-level teacher preparation program and**
37 **are student teaching.**

38 **(b) The department shall determine the amount of each scholarship awarded**
39 **under this subdivision based on an equal distribution of such remaining moneys among**
40 **all students eligible under this subdivision.**

41 **(c) No amount granted for tuition and under this subdivision shall exceed the**
42 **amount of tuition charged a Missouri resident at the University of Missouri-Columbia**
43 **for attendance for one semester.**

44 3. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

45 (1) "Eligible student", an individual who:

46 (a) Is a United States citizen and a Missouri resident;

47 (b) Enters and makes a commitment to pursue a teacher education program approved
48 by the department of elementary and secondary education and offered by a four-year college
49 or university located in Missouri;

50 (c) Signs an agreement with the department of elementary and secondary education in
51 which the recipient agrees to teach in a Missouri public school that is a hard-to-staff school or
52 to teach at least one hard-to-staff subject area in a Missouri public school that offers classes in
53 hard-to-staff subject areas, or both, for two years for every one year the recipient received the
54 scholarship;

55 (d) Maintains a cumulative grade point average of at least two and one-half on a four-
56 point scale or equivalent; and

57 (e) For scholarships awarded for any academic year beginning after June 30, 2025,
58 has made a good faith effort to first secure all available federal sources of grant funding that
59 could be applied to the total cost of such student's eligible tuition and fees as described in
60 subsection 2 of this section;

61 (2) "Hard-to-staff schools", attendance centers where the percentage of certificated
62 positions in the attendance center that were left vacant or were filled with a teacher not fully
63 qualified in the prior academic year exceeds ten percent as reported to the department of
64 elementary and secondary education;

65 (3) "Hard-to-staff subject areas", content areas for which positions were left vacant or
66 were filled with a teacher not fully qualified in the prior academic year as reported to the
67 department of elementary and secondary education.

68 4. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of scholarships or revenues
69 available, the department of elementary and secondary education may consider the financial
70 needs of the applicant.

71 5. The scholarships provided in this section shall be available to eligible students who
72 meet at least one of the following:

73 (1) Have successfully completed two years at a community college with a minimum
74 of forty-eight credit hours and a grade point average of at least two and one-half on a four-
75 point scale or the equivalent;

76 (2) Have been awarded an associate degree or the equivalent;

77 (3) Have successfully completed five semesters at a four-year college or university
78 with a minimum of sixty credit hours and a grade point average of at least two and one-half
79 on a four-point scale or the equivalent; or

80 (4) Have completed their baccalaureate degree.

81 6. (1) Every eligible student receiving scholarships under this section shall teach in
82 an elementary or secondary public school in Missouri as provided in paragraph (c) of
83 subdivision (1) of subsection 3 of this section. The student shall teach for a period of two
84 years for every one year such student received a scholarship under this section; otherwise, the
85 scholarship shall be treated as a loan to the eligible student. Interest shall be charged on the
86 unpaid balance of the amount received from the date the eligible student ceases to teach until
87 the amount received is paid back to the state. The interest rate shall be adjusted annually and
88 shall be equal to one percentage point over the prevailing United States prime rate in effect on
89 January first of such year.

90 (2) In order to provide for the servicing of such loans, the department of elementary
91 and secondary education ~~may~~ **shall** sell such loans to the higher education loan authority of

92 the state of Missouri created pursuant to sections 173.350 to 173.445. For each year the
93 student teaches, up to eight years, one-eighth of the amount received pursuant to this section
94 shall be applied against the total amount received and shall not be subject to the repayment
95 requirement of this section~~[-; provided that twenty-five percent of such amount, not subject to~~
96 ~~repayment, shall be repaid by the local school district to the department].~~

97 (3) The department of elementary and secondary education shall have the power to
98 and shall defer interest and principal payments under certain circumstances, which shall
99 include, but need not be limited to, the enrollment in a graduate program or service in any
100 branch of the Armed Forces of the United States.

101 7. There is hereby established in the state treasury a fund to be known as the "Teacher
102 Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program Fund", which shall consist of all
103 moneys that may be appropriated to it by the general assembly, and in addition may include
104 any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from federal, state, private, or other
105 sources. The fund shall be administered by the department of elementary and secondary
106 education. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080 to the contrary, moneys in the
107 fund shall not be transferred to the credit of the general revenue fund at the end of the
108 biennium. Interest and moneys earned on the fund shall be credited to the fund. Moneys in
109 the fund shall be used solely for the purpose of awarding scholarships under the provisions of
110 this section.

111 8. An individual who has qualified as an eligible student under this section shall
112 continue to qualify as an eligible student for purposes of paragraph (c) of subdivision (1) of
113 subsection 3 of this section as long as such individual remains employed by the school district
114 in which such individual agrees to teach regardless of whether such individual's employing
115 school no longer qualifies as a hard-to-staff school, such class taught by such individual no
116 longer qualifies as a hard-to-staff subject area, or such individual's position within the school
117 district changes.

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