Establishes a loan forgiveness program to assist school districts in recruiting and retaining excellent teachers in science, math, industrial technology and special education and in rural areas.

1. **Recruitment of excellent teachers in science, math, industrial technology and special education and in rural areas; loan forgiveness program.**

**Subd. 1. Program established; account created.** Establishes a loan forgiveness program to assist school districts in recruiting and retaining excellent teachers in science, math, industrial technology and special education and in rural areas. Creates a loan forgiveness program account in the state treasury, which consists of money appropriated by the legislature and repayments and penalties. Annually appropriates all money in the account the commissioner of children, families and learning. Requires the money to be used to repay loans of qualified licensed teachers who agree to teach in high-need areas.

**Subd. 2. Eligibility; application.** (a) Requires program participants to:

(1) have graduated from a teacher preparation institution within twelve months of submitting an application to the commissioner;

(2) have a 3.0 grade point average or higher in that portion of the teacher preparation program affecting licensure in the field of math, science, industrial technology or special education, and be licensed to teach in the field of math, science, industrial technology or special education; and

(3) agree to be employed as a teacher for at least three consecutive school years in a Minnesota school district.

(b) Makes a person who meets the criteria under paragraph (a) and who agrees to be employed as a teacher in a rural Minnesota public school eligible for an additional $1,000 per year.

(c) Requires interested persons to submit an application to the commissioner in the form and manner the commissioner prescribes.

(d) Directs the commissioner to select qualified applicants, notify eligible persons about the...
program, develop and disseminate application materials, and carry out other activities.

**Subd. 3. Loan forgiveness.** Allows the commissioner to select an unspecified number of teacher applicants to participate in this program in fiscal year 2001. Makes program participants responsible for securing their loans. Allows program participants to designate up to $3,000 or $4,000 per year as a qualified loan. Directs the commissioner annually to pay an amount equal to one year of qualified loans, up to a total of three years. Allows participants who move from one qualifying school district to another to remain eligible for applicable portions of the loan repayment.

**Subd. 4. Penalty.** Directs the commissioner to collect full repayment of all qualified loans from a participating teacher who does not fulfill the required three-year length of service. Requires the commissioner to deposit the money the commissioner collects in the loan forgiveness program account. Allows the commissioner to grant a waiver for all or part of the penalty owed if emergency circumstances prevent the teacher from fulfilling the teacher's three-year commitment.

**Appropriation.** Appropriates an unspecified sum from the general fund to the commissioner of the department of children, families and learning in fiscal year 2001 for the loan forgiveness program account.