

Subject Higher Education: Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers

Authors Keeler and others

Analyst Nathan Hopkins

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Overview

This bill creates a new scholarship program and amends two existing financial aid programs (all administered by the Office of Higher Education) to increase financial support for people of color and American Indians studying to become teachers.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Aspiring Minnesota teachers of color scholarship program.
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This section establishes a new scholarship, administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHE), for people of color and American Indians enrolled in a teacher preparation program. The first scholarships would be awarded by November 1, 2021.

Subd. 1. Scholarship program established. Establishes the program in OHE.

Subd. 2. Eligibility. Sets forth criteria for a person to be eligible for a scholarship. Also sets a lifetime limit of \$25,000 on the total amount of scholarship money an individual can receive under this program.

Subd. 3. Scholarship award amount. Allows OHE to set the scholarship award amount based on program funds available and the number of applicants. Imposes maximum (\$10,000) and minimum (\$1,000) annual scholarship award amounts. Requires award amounts to be prorated based on the students' enrollment.

Subd. 4. Administration. Addresses the application process. Requires awards to be paid out to the applicant's school after the school confirms information.

Subd. 5. Creation of account. Establishes an account for the program in the state's special revenue fund. Provides that amounts in the account are available until expended.

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Subd. 6. Report. Requires a legislative report on the program.

2 **Student teacher grants.**

This section amends an existing grant program for teachers in training. Changes in this section are effective July 1, 2021.

Subd. 1. Establishment. Makes conforming changes. Deletes the definition of “shortage area,” which is replaced with a new definition of “licensure shortage area” in subdivision 1a.

Subd. 1a. Definitions. Defines the following terms for this section: “economic development region;” “licensure shortage area;” and “permanent residence.”

Subd. 2. Eligibility. Amends the eligibility criteria. Allows a student teacher to qualify based on either (1) working in a licensure shortage area, or (2) race/ethnicity. Provides that candidates may be eligible due to race/ethnicity so long as the state’s teacher workforce is less diverse than its student population.

Subd. 3. Administration. Provides a schedule for notifying recipients of their grant awards. Reserves a percentage of overall program funds for those qualifying due to race/ethnicity. Requires OHE to give equal weight to all applications received before the application deadline (as opposed to awarding on a rolling basis). Provides that—if program funds are insufficient to provide full awards to all eligible applicants—OHE must prioritize grants based on the severity of a licensure shortage area.

Subd. 4. Creation of account. Creates an account within the special revenue fund to hold funds reserved for student teachers eligible under the race/ethnicity criterion.

Subd. 5. Reporting. Requires a legislative report on the program.

3 **Teacher shortage loan forgiveness program.**

This section amends an existing “loan forgiveness” program for teachers. Changes in this section are subject to the default effective date of August 1, 2021.

Subd. 1. Definitions. Amends the definition of “teacher” to expand the program to include Head Start or Early Head Start nonlicensed early childhood professionals. Removes the definition of “teacher shortage area” and substitutes the definition of “licensure shortage area” from section 2 of the bill.

Subd. 2. Program established; administration. Requires OHE to give equal weight to all applications received before the application deadline (as opposed to awarding on a rolling basis). Provides that—if program funds are insufficient to

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allow for full awards to all eligible applicants—OHE must prioritize grants based on the listed criteria. Requires awards to be distributed equitably across all the state’s economic development regions. Reserves a percentage of program funds for those qualifying due to race/ethnicity.

Subd. 4. Application for loan forgiveness; eligibility. Specifies that a teacher may be eligible for an award under this section if the teacher (1) teaches in one of the ten most severe licensure shortage areas in the teacher’s economic development region, or (2) self-identifies as a person of color or American Indian. Provides that candidates may be eligible due to race/ethnicity so long as the state’s teacher workforce is less diverse than its student population.

Subd. 5. Amount of loan forgiveness. Increases the maximum award from \$1,000 to \$2,000, but allows a teacher who meets both main eligibility criteria to receive up to \$3,000. Increases the total number of annual awards an individual may receive from five to ten.

No changes to subdivisions 6 to 8.

Subd. 9. Annual reporting. Adds additional information required to be included in the programs annual report to the legislature.

4 **Appropriations.**

This section appropriates funds for the programs addressed in sections 1 to 3.

Subd. 1. Aspiring teachers of color scholarships. Appropriates \$10,150,000 in FY2022 and \$16,150,000 in FY2023 for this program. Allows OHE to use \$150,000 to administer the program.

Subd. 2. Student teacher grants. Appropriates \$2,318,000 in FY2022 and \$3,100,000 in FY2023 for this program. Provides that \$500,000 per year of these amounts is to be allocated according to the statutory formula, with the remainder being reserved for student teachers qualifying due to race/ethnicity. Allows OHE to use \$100,000 to administer the program.

Subd. 3. Teacher shortage loan forgiveness program. Appropriates \$2 million in each fiscal year for this program. Sets a base appropriation of \$5 million for future years. Allows OHE to use up to three percent of the appropriation to administer the program.

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5	<p>Repealer.</p> <p>Repeals existing rules related to the teacher shortage loan forgiveness program. These existing rules would be largely incompatible with the changes in section 3 of the bill.</p>
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