

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Seagren and Others

Subject: Recruiting excellent teachers in specified subject areas and in rural areas

Analyst: Lisa Larson, 651-296-8036

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Overview

A number of recent studies from the University of Minnesota, Education Minnesota and elsewhere suggest that Minnesota shortly will face a significant challenge finding qualified teachers to teach in its public elementary and secondary schools. According to some, the public schools will need to hire about 25,000 teachers over the next five years. Teachers are especially needed in the fields of science, math and special education.

Section

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

Subd. 1. Program established; account created. Establishes a loan repayment 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 repayment program account in the state treasury. Includes in the account money appropriated by the legislature for loan repayments. Annually appropriates all money in this account to the higher education services office, which must use the money to repay loans of qualified licensed teachers who agree to teach in high-need subject areas and rural areas.

Subd. 2. Eligibility; application. (a) Requires a person interested in participating in this program to have:

- (1) graduated from an approved teacher preparation institution within twelve months of submitting an application to the higher education services office to participate in this program; and
- (2) 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 one of those fields.

(b) Allows teachers who received 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 to participate in this program if the teacher:

- (1) is licensed to teach math, science, industrial technology or special education and is employed for the first time in a Minnesota school district, placed on unrequested leave of absence, terminated because a position is discontinued or there is a lack of pupils, or whose contract as a probationary teacher is not renewed and another school district employs the person to teach math, science, industrial technology or special education; or
- (2) has continuing contract or teacher tenure rights and receives certification to teach math, science, industrial technology or special education within twelve months of submitting an application to the higher education services office to participate in this program.

(c) Makes a teacher who meets the criteria in paragraph (a) or (b) and is employed in a rural public school eligible to receive up to an additional \$2,000 per year for loan repayments.

(d) Obligates interested persons to submit an application to higher education services office. Requires participating teachers to be employed at least three consecutive school years in a Minnesota public school.

(e) Directs the higher education services office to ensure that applicants are qualified, transmit notice of the program, make application materials available and perform other program-related activities.

Subd. 3. Loan repayment. For fiscal year 2001 and following, allows the higher education services office to select an unspecified number of teacher applicants to participate in this program. Makes teacher participants responsible for securing their own loans. For each year up to a total of three years that an eligible teacher is employed in a school district, directs the higher education services office to pay loan repayment amounts for the costs the teacher incurred for post-secondary education leading to a license to teach. Allocates the following repayment amounts:

- (1) at the end of the first successful school year, up to \$1,000 to a teacher teaching math, science, industrial technology or special education in the metropolitan area and up to \$3,000 to a teacher teaching math, science, industrial technology or special education in a rural area;
- (2) at the end of the second successful school year, up to \$3,000 to a teacher teaching math, science, industrial technology or special education in the metropolitan area and up to \$5,000 to a teacher teaching math, science, industrial technology or special education in a rural area; and
- (3) at the end of the third successful school year, up to \$5,000 to a teacher teaching math, science, industrial technology or special education in the metropolitan area and up to \$7,000 to a teacher teaching math, science, industrial technology or special education in a rural area.

(b) Directs the higher education services office to make payments that must not exceed the amount of the participant's loan.

Subd. 4. Rules. Directs the higher education services office to adopt rules to administer the program, consistent with its statutory rule making authority.

This section is effective 7/1/01.

2 **Appropriation.** Appropriates an unspecified amount of money from the general fund to the higher education services office in fiscal year 2002 for the loan repayment program.