

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2833

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 20, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2833 (1R), with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes a Teacher Residency Program, the purpose of which is to offer stipends and provide program participants with the education and field experience necessary to obtain a New Jersey certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS), a credential that allows an individual to seek and accept employment as a teacher in a public school. The Teacher Residency Program is open to public high school students entering grade 12 and non-certificated staff members who have obtained a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree and who meet certain eligibility criteria. Under the bill, a non-certificated staff member is defined to mean a member of the staff, including a paraprofessional, of any public school holding office, position, or employment of such character that the qualifications, for such office, position, or employment, do not require the staff member to hold a valid and effective standard, provisional, or emergency certificate issued by the State Board of Examiners.

Under the bill, a public school and institution of higher education chosen by the Department of Education to offer the Teacher Residency Program will jointly enter into an agreement with the department in which the public school and institution of higher education agree to provide program participants with the education and field experience necessary to obtain a CEAS.

Under this bill, the Teacher Residency program will be comprised of three stages. Stage one of the program is open to high school students entering grade 12, stage two of the program is open to individuals who have completed stage one of the program and non-certificated staff members who have obtained a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree, and stage three of the program is open to individuals who have completed stage two of the program. Individuals who complete stage three of the program will be awarded a Teacher Resident II credential. Individuals with a Teacher Resident II credential who meet the general certification

requirements established by the State Board of Education will be eligible for a CEAS.

As a condition of acceptance into the program, the bill requires a program participant to enter into an agreement with the Department of Education to maintain employment as a teaching staff member in the State for four years following completion of the program. A program participant who is unable to obtain employment as a teaching staff member in the State following completion of the program may seek a waiver from the department from this requirement.

Under the bill, a program participant will receive stipend awards, which will be distributed in such manner as determined by the Commissioner of Education and Secretary of Higher Education. The stipends will be awarded as follows: (1) \$2,000 during stage one of the program; (2) \$10,000 during stage two of the program; and (3) \$15,000 during stage three of the program. In order to receive the full stipend award during stages two and three, the program participant must be enrolled full-time in an institution of higher education and complete all required hours of field experience. The bill permits the commissioner and secretary to provide additional stipend awards to a program participant whose course of study while enrolled in the program may lead to a subject area endorsement in any subject area in which there is a shortage of teachers in the State as determined by the commissioner.

The bill requires program participants to adhere to certain performance standards as a condition of participation in the program.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- (1) rename the program the Teacher Residency Program;
- (2) provide that a non-certificated staff member, which is defined to include a paraprofessional, who has obtained a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree is eligible to participate in the program;
- (3) clarify that any institution of higher education with a Department of Education approved educator preparation program may partner with a public school to offer the Teacher Residency Program;
- (4) alter certain requirements needed to complete stage one of the program;
- (5) alter the number of field experience hours needed to complete stage two and three of the program to a minimum of 720 hours of field experience and a minimum of 1000 hours of field experience, respectively;
- (6) require, as a condition of acceptance into the program, that a program participant enter into an agreement with the Department of Education to maintain employment as a teaching staff member in the

State for four years following completion of the program, and permit the department to issue a waiver of this requirement to a program participant who is unable to obtain employment as a teaching staff member in the State following completion of the program;

(7) clarify that the stipend awards available under the program will be provided during each stage of the program;

(8) permit the Commissioner of Education and Secretary of Higher Education to provide additional stipend awards to a program participant whose course of study while enrolled in the program may lead to a subject area endorsement in any subject area in which there is a shortage of teachers in the State as determined by the commissioner; and

(9) remove a provision in the bill permitting the commissioner, in consultation with the secretary, to provide partial distribution of stipend awards provided for under the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) determines that this bill may lead to indeterminate, annual cost increases to the Department of Education (DOE), local school districts, and institutions of higher education with Department of Education approved educator preparation programs. The primary driver of these increases under the bill would be the provision of stipends to program participants in each of the three stages of the Teacher Residency Program. The provisions of the bill require a program participant to receive stipend awards during each of three stages associated with the program, as follows: 1) \$2,000 during stage one of the program; 2) \$10,000 during stage two of the program; and 3) \$15,000 during stage three of the program. The bill permits the Commissioner of Education and the Secretary of Higher Education to provide additional stipends to a program participant enrolled in a subject area in which there is a shortage of teachers in the State.

The OLS cannot estimate the levels of program participation among public high school students entering grade 12 and non-certificated staff members who have obtained a minimum of 60 college credits or an associate degree, and so cannot determine the scope of program costs. The bill does not explicitly specify the source of funds for these stipends. The OLS assumes that the costs of providing these stipends will be primarily borne by the DOE, and that school districts hosting program participants and the institutions of higher education with which these districts partner will also incur costs related to their participation in the program. To the extent that the program drives higher enrollment in institutions of higher education, these institutions could realize additional tuition revenue.