

Amend **HB 518** (Senate committee printing) by adding the following SECTIONS to the bill and renumbering subsequent SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

SECTION _____. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter GG to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER GG. TEXAS TEACH CORPS STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Sec. 61.9831. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board shall provide, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, assistance in the repayment of eligible student loans for eligible undergraduate students who agree to teach mathematics or science for a specified period in school districts in this state that are determined by the Texas Education Agency to have shortages of teachers in mathematics or science.

Sec. 61.9832. ELIGIBILITY; AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS.

(a) To be eligible to receive loan repayment assistance under this subchapter, a person must:

(1) apply for the loan repayment assistance in the manner prescribed by the board;

(2) have graduated from high school in this state;

(3) be currently enrolled in an educator preparation program accredited by the State Board for Educator Certification that is provided by an institution of higher education or by a private or independent institution of higher education in this state;

(4) have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a four-point scale or the equivalent;

(5) enter into an agreement with the board providing that:

(A) the person will earn a baccalaureate degree through completion of an educator preparation program described by Subdivision (3);

(B) the person will graduate with a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a four-point scale or the equivalent;

(C) the person will obtain, within the period prescribed by board rule, appropriate certification under

Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to teach mathematics or science in a public school in this state;

(D) beginning with the first school year that begins after the date the person obtains the appropriate certification described by Paragraph (C), the person will accept an offer of full-time employment to teach mathematics or science, as applicable based on the person's certification, in a school district in this state selected by the person from among districts determined by the Texas Education Agency to have shortages of teachers in that subject for that first school year for which the person is accepting employment;

(E) the person will complete four consecutive years of employment as a full-time classroom teacher in a district described by Paragraph (D) whose primary duty is to teach mathematics or science, as applicable, based on the person's certification; and

(F) the person acknowledges the conditional nature of the loan repayment assistance; and

(6) comply with any other requirement adopted by the board under this subchapter.

(b) Except as provided by Section 61.9833, for the first school year of employment and each following consecutive school year of employment, as described by Subsections (a)(5)(D) and (E), not to exceed a total of four years, the board may provide assistance for the repayment of a portion of an eligible person's eligible loans. Subject to the availability of funding under Section 61.9836 and except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the amount of an assistance payment provided under this subsection in any year to an eligible person is \$5,000. The board shall increase that amount as necessary to adjust for inflation or, as determined by the board, on the basis of other relevant considerations. The board shall reduce the amount of a single assistance payment or refrain from making an assistance payment to an eligible person as necessary to avoid making total payments under this subsection to the person in an amount greater than the total amount of principal and interest due on the person's eligible loans.

(c) For purposes of this subchapter, whether a school district is determined to have a shortage of mathematics or science teachers for a school year is based on a determination made by the Texas Education Agency during the preceding school year. Not later than April 1 of each school year, the Texas Education Agency shall determine which school districts in this state have a shortage of mathematics or science teachers during that school year and shall provide that information to the board and to each educator preparation program in this state accredited by the State Board for Educator Certification.

(d) For purposes of Subsection (a)(5)(E), if a person is employed as a teacher in a school district determined to have a shortage of teachers in mathematics or science for the first year of employment, each subsequent year of continuous employment as a teacher in that district is considered to be employment in a district determined to have such a shortage of teachers in that subject in that subsequent year, regardless of whether the Texas Education Agency determined that the district had a shortage of teachers in that subject for that year.

(e) To satisfy the teaching obligation prescribed by an agreement under this section, a person must teach mathematics or science courses for not less than an average of four hours each school day.

Sec. 61.9833. EXCEPTION TO CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENT. The board shall excuse an otherwise eligible person from the requirement imposed by Section 61.9832(a)(5)(E) that the employment be performed in consecutive years if the break in employment is a result of the person's:

(1) full-time enrollment in a course of study related to the field of teaching that is approved by the State Board for Educator Certification and provided by an institution of higher education or by a private or independent institution of higher education in this state;

(2) service on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, including as a member of a reserve or National Guard unit called for active duty;

(3) temporary total disability for a period of not

more than 36 months as established by the affidavit of a qualified physician;

(4) inability to secure employment as required by Section 61.9832 for a period not to exceed 12 months, because of care required by a disabled spouse or child;

(5) inability, despite reasonable efforts, to secure, for a single period not to exceed 12 months, employment as required by Section 61.9832; or

(6) satisfaction of the provisions of any other exception adopted by the board for purposes of this section.

Sec. 61.9834. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide under this subchapter repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan that:

(1) is for education at a public or private institution of higher education; and

(2) is received by an eligible person through an eligible lender.

(b) If the loan is not a state or federal guaranteed student loan, the note or other writing governing the terms of the loan must require the loan proceeds to be used for expenses incurred by a person in attending a postsecondary educational institution.

(c) The board may not provide loan repayment assistance under this subchapter for a student loan that is in default at the time of the person's application for repayment assistance.

Sec. 61.9835. PAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE. (a) The board shall pay any loan repayment assistance under this subchapter in a lump sum:

(1) payable to both the holder of the loan and the eligible person; or

(2) delivered on the eligible person's behalf directly to the holder of the loan.

(b) Loan repayment assistance provided under this subchapter may be applied to any amount due on the loan.

(c) Each fiscal biennium, the board shall attempt to allocate all money available to the board for the purpose of providing loan repayment assistance under this subchapter.

Sec. 61.9836. MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHER INVESTMENT

FUND. (a) In this section, "fund" means the mathematics and science teacher investment fund.

(b) The fund is a dedicated account in the general revenue fund and consists of:

(1) appropriations of money to the fund by the legislature;

(2) gifts, grants, and other donations received for the fund; and

(3) interest and other earnings from the investment of the fund.

(c) The fund may be used only to provide repayment assistance for the repayment of loans eligible under Section 61.9834, including related administrative costs.

(d) The fund is exempt from the application of Sections 403.095 and 404.071, Government Code.

(e) The board may solicit and accept grants, gifts, or donations from any public or private entity for the purposes of this subchapter. All money received under this subchapter shall be deposited in the fund.

Sec. 61.9837. AMOUNT OF LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE.

(a) The total amount of loan repayment assistance paid by the board under this subchapter may not exceed the total amount of money available in the fund under Section 61.9836 and any other money that the board is legally authorized to use for purposes of this subchapter.

(b) Not more than 4,000 eligible persons may be provided loan repayment assistance in the amount authorized under this subchapter in any school year.

(b-1) This subsection expires January 1, 2016. Notwithstanding Subsection (b), not more than the following number of eligible persons may be provided loan repayment assistance in the amount authorized under this subchapter in the specified school year:

(1) in the 2012-2013 school year, not more than 1,000 eligible persons may be provided loan repayment assistance;

(2) in the 2013-2014 school year, not more than 2,000 eligible persons may be provided loan repayment assistance; and

(3) in the 2014-2015 school year, not more than 3,000 eligible persons may be provided loan repayment assistance.

(c) If in any year the amount of money available for loan repayment assistance under this subchapter is insufficient to provide loan repayment assistance to each eligible applicant or if there are more eligible applicants than the number authorized by this section, the board shall establish criteria to determine which eligible applicants will be provided repayment assistance as the board determines appropriate to further the purposes of this subchapter.

Sec. 61.9838. RULES. The board shall:

(1) adopt rules necessary for the administration of this subchapter, including a rule providing for the manner in which a person may apply for loan repayment assistance; and

(2) distribute to each educator preparation program approved by the State Board for Educator Certification offered by an institution of higher education or by a private or independent institution of higher education in this state a copy of the rules adopted under this section.

SECTION _____. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall begin providing loan repayment assistance under Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, for eligible persons teaching in the 2012-2013 school year.

SECTION _____. Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, does not make an appropriation. A provision in Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, that creates a new governmental program, creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the provision.