

By: Eissler

H.B. No. 2773

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Texas Teach Corps Scholarship Program for students who agree to teach in public schools in this state that have shortages of teachers in mathematics or science.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter GG to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER GG. TEXAS TEACH CORPS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sec. 61.9831. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIP.

(a) In accordance with this subchapter and board rules, the board shall establish and administer the Texas Teach Corps Scholarship Program to award scholarships to undergraduate students who:

(1) are enrolled in educator preparation programs provided by public or private institutions of higher education in this state; and

(2) agree to teach for a specified period in the public schools in this state that are determined by the Texas Education Agency to have shortages of teachers in mathematics or science.

(b) The amount of a scholarship under this subchapter for an academic year is equal to the lesser of:

(1) the total amount of tuition that the public or private institution of higher education in which the scholarship recipient is enrolled charges the recipient for that academic year for semester credit hours for which the recipient may use the

scholarship to pay tuition as provided by Subsection (c); or

(2) \$5,000.

(c) A student may use a scholarship under this subchapter only to pay tuition for a semester credit hour that is required for completion of the educator preparation program in which the student is enrolled.

(d) For purposes of this subchapter, not later than April 1 of each school year, the Texas Education Agency shall determine which public schools in this state are anticipated to have shortages of mathematics or science teachers during the following 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.

Sec. 61.9832. ELIGIBILITY; LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS. (a) To be eligible to receive a scholarship under this subchapter, a person must:

(1) have graduated from a high school in this state with an overall grade point average:

(A) of at least 2.75 on a four-point scale or the equivalent; and

(B) in the top 35 percent of the student's graduating class;

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

(3) enter into an agreement with the board as provided

1 by Section 61.9833.

2 (b) Not more than 4,000 scholarships may be awarded under  
3 this subchapter for an academic year.

4 (b-1) This subsection expires September 1, 2013.  
5 Notwithstanding Subsection (b), not more than the following number  
6 of scholarships may be awarded under this subchapter for the  
7 specified academic year:

8 (1) for the 2010-2011 academic year, not more than  
9 1,000 scholarships may be awarded;

10 (2) for the 2011-2012 academic year, not more than  
11 2,000 scholarships may be awarded; and

12 (3) for the 2012-2013 academic year, not more than  
13 3,000 scholarships may be awarded.

14 (c) If in any year the amount of money available for  
15 scholarships under this subchapter is insufficient to award a  
16 scholarship to each eligible applicant or if there are more  
17 eligible applicants than the number of scholarships authorized by  
18 this section, the board shall establish criteria to determine which  
19 eligible applicants will be granted scholarships as the board  
20 determines appropriate to further the purposes of this subchapter,  
21 including criteria that:

22 (1) are related to the financial need of an applicant;  
23 and

24 (2) serve to ensure geographic and ethnic diversity  
25 among scholarship recipients.

26 Sec. 61.9833. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) To qualify for a  
27 scholarship under this subchapter, a person must enter into a

1 written agreement with the board as provided by this section. The  
2 agreement must:

3 (1) specify the conditions the person must satisfy to  
4 receive the scholarship award;

5 (2) require the person to earn a baccalaureate degree  
6 through completion of an educator preparation program accredited by  
7 the State Board for Educator Certification that is provided by a  
8 public or private institution of higher education in this state;

9 (3) require the person to obtain, within the period  
10 prescribed by board rule, appropriate certification under  
11 Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to teach mathematics or science in a  
12 public school in this state;

13 (4) require the person to accept, for the first school  
14 year that begins after the date the person obtains the appropriate  
15 certification, an offer of full-time employment to teach  
16 mathematics or science, as applicable based on the person's  
17 certification, in a public school in this state selected by the  
18 person from among schools anticipated by the Texas Education Agency  
19 to have shortages of teachers in that subject for that first school  
20 year for which the person is accepting employment;

21 (5) require the person to complete eight years of  
22 full-time employment teaching as follows:

23 (A) beginning with the school year described by  
24 Subdivision (4), four consecutive school years of employment  
25 teaching mathematics or science, as applicable based on the  
26 person's certification, in one or more public schools in this state  
27 selected by the person from among schools anticipated by the Texas

1 Education Agency to have shortages of teachers in that subject for  
2 the person's applicable year of employment by the school; and

3 (B) beginning with the school year immediately  
4 following the last of the four consecutive school years described  
5 by Paragraph (A), four additional consecutive school years teaching  
6 in any public school in this state;

7 (6) provide that any scholarship award the person  
8 receives under this subchapter constitutes an interest-free loan  
9 until the person:

10 (A) subject to Section 61.9835, satisfies the  
11 requirements of Subdivision (5) and any other applicable conditions  
12 of the agreement; or

13 (B) is excused from the repayment obligation in  
14 accordance with law; and

15 (7) require the person to sign a promissory note  
16 acknowledging the conditional nature of the scholarship award  
17 received and promising to repay any unforgiven amount of that award  
18 and reasonable collection costs if the person does not satisfy the  
19 applicable conditions and is not excused from the repayment  
20 obligation in accordance with law.

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

25 (c) For purposes of Subsection (a)(5)(A), if a person is  
26 employed as a teacher in a public school anticipated to have a  
27 shortage of teachers in mathematics or science in the first year of

1 employment, each subsequent year of continuous employment as a  
2 teacher in that school is considered to be employment in a school  
3 anticipated to have such a shortage of teachers in that subject in  
4 that subsequent year, regardless of whether the Texas Education  
5 Agency anticipated that the school would have a shortage of  
6 teachers in that subject in that year.

7 (d) The board shall determine the terms of the promissory  
8 note required by Subsection (a)(7). To the extent practicable, the  
9 terms must be the same as those applicable to state or federally  
10 guaranteed student loans made at the same time.

11 Sec. 61.9834. EXCEPTIONS TO TEACHING AND REPAYMENT  
12 OBLIGATIONS. (a) A person is not considered to be in violation of  
13 the teaching obligation in the agreement described by Section  
14 61.9833 during any period in which the person:

15 (1) is pursuing a full-time course of study related to  
16 the field of teaching offered by a public or private institution of  
17 higher education in this state and approved by the State Board for  
18 Educator Certification;

19 (2) is serving on active duty as a member of the armed  
20 forces of the United States, including as a member of a reserve  
21 force or National Guard called to active duty;

22 (3) is temporarily totally disabled for a period not  
23 to exceed 36 months as established by the affidavit of a qualified  
24 physician;

25 (4) is unable to secure employment for a period not to  
26 exceed 12 months because of care required by a disabled spouse or  
27 child;

1           (5) is seeking and unable to find, for a single period  
2 not to exceed 12 months, full-time employment teaching in a public  
3 school in this state, or if the person is within the period of the  
4 agreement described by Section 61.9833(a)(5)(A), full-time  
5 employment teaching in a public school in this state anticipated to  
6 have a shortage of mathematics or science teachers, as applicable  
7 based on the person's certification, for the year for which the  
8 person is seeking employment; or

9           (6) satisfies the provisions of any other teaching  
10 exception adopted by the board.

11           (b) A person is excused from the repayment obligation in a  
12 promissory note described by Section 61.9833 if:

13           (1) the person becomes permanently totally disabled as  
14 established by the affidavit of a qualified physician; or

15           (2) the board waives repayment in the case of extreme  
16 hardship to the person.

17           Sec. 61.9835. FORGIVENESS OF REPAYMENT OBLIGATION. The  
18 board shall forgive 25 percent of the total amount of a person's  
19 scholarship awards under this subchapter for each complete school  
20 year the person teaches in accordance with the agreement under  
21 Section 61.9833 after the expiration of the period described by  
22 Subsection (a)(5)(A) of that section.

23           Sec. 61.9836. GRANTS, GIFTS, AND DONATIONS. In addition to  
24 money appropriated by the legislature, the board may solicit and  
25 accept grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private  
26 source for the purposes of this subchapter.

27           Sec. 61.9837. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules to

1 administer this subchapter, including rules:

2 (1) providing for the manner in which a student may  
3 apply for a scholarship; and

4 (2) providing for notification of the scholarship  
5 program under this subchapter to students enrolled in educator  
6 preparation programs in this state.

7 (b) The board shall distribute to each educator preparation  
8 program of a public or private institution of higher education in  
9 this state a copy of the rules adopted under this section.

10 SECTION 2. Not later than December 31, 2009, the Texas  
11 Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency  
12 shall adopt rules for the Texas Teach Corps Scholarship Program  
13 under Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this  
14 Act.

15 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.