

By: Howard of Travis

H.B. No. 2928

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and administration of the public high school mathematics and science teachers undergraduate education scholarship program.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER FF. MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHERS UNDERGRADUATE
EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sec. 61.9831. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. (a) In accordance with this subchapter and board rules, the board shall establish and administer a program to award scholarships to undergraduate students who are enrolled in educator preparation programs at public or private institutions of higher education in this state and who agree to teach mathematics or science courses in certain public high schools in this state for a specified period after graduation.

(b) The amount of a scholarship under this subchapter for a semester or other academic term is equal to the amount of tuition that the public or private institution of higher education in which the scholarship recipient is enrolled charges the recipient for that semester or other term.

Sec. 61.9832. ELIGIBILITY. (a) To be eligible to receive a scholarship under this subchapter, a student must:

1 (1) be enrolled in a State Board for Educator
2 Certification accredited educator preparation program that is
3 provided by a public or private institution of higher education in
4 this state and that prepares students to obtain appropriate
5 certification to teach a mathematics or science course in a public
6 high school in this state;

7 (2) maintain a cumulative grade point average of at
8 least 3.0 on a four-point scale or the equivalent; and

9 (3) enter into an agreement with the board as provided
10 by Section 61.9833.

11 (b) The board may limit the number of scholarships that may
12 be awarded under this subchapter in an academic year. If the amount
13 available for scholarships under this subchapter is insufficient to
14 provide a scholarship to each eligible applicant, the board shall
15 establish criteria to determine which applicants will be granted a
16 scholarship as the board determines appropriate to further the
17 purposes of this subchapter.

18 Sec. 61.9833. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) To qualify for a
19 scholarship under this subchapter, a person must enter into a
20 written agreement with the board as provided by this section. The
21 agreement must:

22 (1) specify the conditions the person must satisfy to
23 receive the scholarship award;

24 (2) require the person to earn a baccalaureate degree
25 through completion of a State Board for Educator Certification
26 accredited educator preparation program described by Section
27 61.9832(a)(1);

1 (3) require the person to obtain, within the period
2 prescribed by board rule, appropriate certification to teach a
3 mathematics or science course in a public high school in this state;

4 (4) require the person to accept, during the first
5 school year that begins after the date the person obtains the
6 appropriate certification, an offer of full-time employment to
7 teach a mathematics or science course in a public high school in
8 this state designated by the Texas Education Agency as having a
9 shortage of teachers certified to teach in those fields;

10 (5) provide that any scholarship award the person
11 receives under this subchapter constitutes a loan until the person:

12 (A) completes four consecutive years of
13 full-time employment primarily teaching mathematics or science
14 courses in a public high school in this state described by
15 Subdivision (4), beginning with the school year described by
16 Subdivision (4), and satisfies any other applicable conditions of
17 the agreement; or

18 (B) is excused from the repayment obligation in
19 accordance with law;

20 (6) require the board to deduct from the conditional
21 amount owed by the person, at the end of each year of teaching
22 completed by the person in accordance with the agreement, the
23 amount of the scholarship received by the person for an academic
24 year; and

25 (7) require the person to sign a promissory note
26 acknowledging the conditional nature of the scholarship award
27 received and promising to repay any remaining amount of that

1 assistance plus applicable interest and reasonable collection
2 costs if the person does not satisfy the applicable conditions and
3 is not excused from the repayment obligation in accordance with
4 law.

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

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

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

17 (2) is serving on active duty as a member of the armed
18 forces of the United States;

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

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

25 (5) is seeking and unable to find, for a single period
26 not to exceed 12 months, full-time employment teaching mathematics
27 or science courses in a public high school in this state designated

1 under Section 61.9833(a)(4) as having a shortage of math and
2 science teachers; or

3 (6) satisfies the provisions of any other teaching
4 exception adopted by the board.

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

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

9 (2) the board waives repayment in the case of extreme
10 hardship to the person.

11 (c) A person who is employed at a public high school
12 designated under Section 61.9833(a)(4) as having a shortage of math
13 and science teachers is not required to change schools in a
14 subsequent school year if the high school fails to receive that
15 designation for that subsequent year.

16 Sec. 61.9835. GRANTS, GIFTS, AND DONATIONS. In addition to
17 money appropriated by the legislature, the board may solicit and
18 accept grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private
19 source for the purposes of this subchapter.

20 Sec. 61.9836. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules
21 necessary to administer this subchapter, including rules providing
22 for the manner in which a person may apply for a scholarship.

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

26 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
27 shall adopt rules for the public high school mathematics and

1 science teachers undergraduate education scholarship program under
2 Subchapter FF, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, not
3 later than December 31, 2009.

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