

By: Patrick

S.B. No. 816

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 math and 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 math and 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

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

2 (2) \$5,000.

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

7 (d) For purposes of this subchapter, not later than April 1
8 of each school year, the Texas Education Agency shall determine
9 which public schools in this state are anticipated to have
10 shortages of math and science teachers during the following school
11 year and shall provide that information to the board and to each
12 educator preparation program in this state accredited by the State
13 Board for Educator Certification.

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

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

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

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

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

27 (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
27 a 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 in a public school in this state;

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

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

21 (A) beginning with the school year described by
22 Subdivision (4), four consecutive school years of employment
23 teaching in one or more public schools in this state selected by the
24 person from among schools anticipated by the Texas Education Agency
25 to have shortages of teachers in math and science for the person's
26 applicable year of employment by the school; and

27 (B) beginning with the school year immediately

1 following the last of the four consecutive school years described
2 by Paragraph (A), four additional consecutive school years teaching
3 in any public school in this state;

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

7 (A) subject to Section 61.9835, satisfies the
8 requirements of Subdivision (5) and any other applicable conditions
9 of the agreement; or

10 (B) is excused from the repayment obligation in
11 accordance with law; and

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

18 (b) To satisfy the teaching obligation prescribed by an
19 agreement under this section, a person must teach math or science
20 classes for not less than an average of four hours each school day.

21 (c) For purposes of Subsection (a)(5)(A), if a person is
22 employed as a teacher in a public school anticipated to have a
23 shortage of teachers in math and science subjects in the first year
24 of employment, each subsequent year of continuous employment as a
25 teacher in that school is considered to be employment in a school
26 anticipated to have such a shortage of teachers in that subsequent
27 year, regardless of whether the Texas Education Agency anticipated

1 that the school would have a shortage of teachers in that year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 (5) is seeking and unable to find, for a single period
24 not to exceed 12 months, full-time employment teaching in a public
25 school in this state, or if the person is within the period of the
26 agreement described by Section 61.9833(a)(5)(A), full-time
27 employment teaching in a public school in this state anticipated to

1 have a shortage of math and science teachers for the year for which
2 the person is seeking employment; 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 Sec. 61.9835. FORGIVENESS OF REPAYMENT OBLIGATION. The
12 board shall forgive 25 percent of the total amount of a person's
13 scholarship awards under this subchapter for each complete school
14 year the person teaches in accordance with the agreement under
15 Section 61.9833 after the expiration of the period described by
16 Subsection (a)(5)(A) of that section.

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

21 Sec. 61.9837. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules to
22 administer this subchapter, including rules:

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

25 (2) providing for notification of the scholarship
26 program under this subchapter to students enrolled in educator
27 preparation programs in this state.

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

4 SECTION 2. Not later than December 31, 2009, the Texas
5 Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency
6 shall adopt rules for the Texas Teach Corps Scholarship Program
7 under Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this
8 Act.

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