By: Bernal H.B. No. 1098

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Teacher Recruitment Scholarship Program and the Texas Teacher Retention Incentive Program.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER QQ. TEXAS TEACHER RECRUITMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sec. 61.9970. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT. (a) The board shall establish and administer, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, the Texas Teacher Recruitment Scholarship Program under which the board provides an annual conditional scholarship to a student who meets the eligibility criteria prescribed by Section 61.9972 and is nominated to receive a scholarship.

(b) The amount of a scholarship under this subchapter is the lesser of:

(1) $40,000 to be disbursed at a rate of $10,000 per academic year for four academic years; or

(2) the amount equivalent to tuition and fees for an academic year for four academic years.

(c) If a student nominated to receive a scholarship under this subchapter is awarded a baccalaureate degree prior to receiving the scholarship in its entirety, any remaining

scholarship shall be used to repay any outstanding student loans.

Sec. 61.9971. REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board shall provide in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, assistance in the repayment of student loans for certified teachers who are entitled to assistance under Section 61.9970(c).

Sec. 61.9972. ELIGIBILITY; NOMINATION AND SELECTION. (a) To receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter, a student must:

(1) be enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in this state;

(2) enroll in a university sponsored teacher preparation program;

(3) be nominated to receive a scholarship by the university in which the student is enrolled; and

(4) enter into an agreement with the board under Section 61.9973.

(b) In each year, the number of new students awarded a scholarship shall not exceed 2 percent of the current teacher workforce as reported by the Texas Education Agency.

(c) For a student to continue to receive a scholarship awarded under this subchapter, the student must maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution in which the student is enrolled.

Sec. 61.9973. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) To receive a scholarship under this subchapter, a student must enter into an agreement with the board as provided by this section. The agreement must require the student to:

(1) complete a university sponsored teacher preparation program;

(2) satisfactorily complete the requirements necessary to obtain a teacher certification;

(3) graduate not later than five years after the date the student first enrolls in a public or private institution of higher education in this state;

(4) after graduation, enter into a contract with a school district or open-enrollment charter school to serve as a teacher for four years; and

(5) agree to repay the scholarship if the student:

(A) fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress;

(B) withdraws from the scholarship program; or

(C) fails to fulfill a commitment described by Subdivision (4).

(b) The board shall adopt rules to exempt a student from the repayment of a scholarship under an agreement entered into under this section if the student is unable to meet the obligations of the agreement as a result of extraordinary circumstances.

Sec. 61.9974. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this subchapter, including rules regarding the eligibility criteria and the selection of scholarship recipients.

Sec. 61.9975. LIMITATION ON SCHOLARSHIP. A person may not receive a scholarship under this subchapter after earning a cumulative total of 150 credit hours or after being awarded a

baccalaureate degree, whichever occurs first.

Sec. 61.9976. FUNDING. The board shall administer this subchapter using available appropriations and gifts, grants, and donations made for the purposes of this subchapter.

SECTION 2. Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter R to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER R. TEXAS TEACHER RETENTION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Sec. 21.901. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY. A person is eligible for this program if they are currently:

(1) a certified teacher employed by a school district or open-enrollment charter school; and

(2) not eligible for designation under Section 48.112.

Sec. 21.902. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY. After initially qualifying for the incentive program under Section 21.901, a person may continue to receive the award in subsequent years if:

(1) the individual is employed by the same school district or open-enrollment charter school in which they were nominated initially to receive the incentive;

(2) the individual continues to hold a teacher certification in good standing with the Texas Education Agency; and

(3) the individual is not eligible for designation under Section 48.112.

Sec. 21.903. AWARD. An eligible person is entitled to receive an annual retention incentive of $10,000 for a period of four years.

Sec. 21.904. NOMINATION. (a) A school district or open-enrollment charter school shall determine which individuals

are eligible for nomination.

(b) an individual may not be nominated if:

(1) they have already been nominated at their current or prior school district or open-enrollment charter school and the current school district or open-enrollment charter school has eligible individuals, under Section 21.901, who have not been nominated; or

(2) they have received a scholarship under Chapter 61, Subchapter QQ, and their current school district or open-enrollment charter school has eligible individuals, under Section 21.901, who have not been nominated.

(c) A school district or open-enrollment charter school must nominate annually a number of teachers to receive the award equal to 8 percent of the teacher workforce as reported by the Texas Education Agency.

Sec. 21.905. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) To receive an incentive under this subchapter, a teacher must enter into an agreement with the agency as provided by this section. The agreement must require the teacher to:

(1) be continuously employed by the same school district or open-enrollment charter school for four years;

(2) hold a teacher certification in good standing with the Texas Education Agency; and

(3) not receive a designation under Section 48.112;

(4) agree to repay the incentive if the teacher:

(A) withdraws from the scholarship program; or

(B) fails to fulfill a commitment described by

Subdivisions (1) and (2).

(b) The agency shall adopt rules to exempt a teacher from the repayment of an incentive under an agreement entered into under this section if the teacher is unable to meet the obligations of the agreement as a result of extraordinary circumstances.

Sec. 21.906. FUNDING. The agency shall administer this subchapter using available appropriations and gifts, grants, and donations made for the purposes of this subchapter.

SECTION 3. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall award scholarships under Subchapter QQ, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2028-2029 academic year. The coordinating board shall adopt the rules required by that subchapter as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

SECTION 4. The Texas Education Agency shall award incentives under Subchapter R, Chapter 21, Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2028-2029 academic year. The agency shall adopt the rules required by that subchapter as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

SECTION 5. This Act does not make an appropriation. A provision in 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.

SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this

Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2027.