

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 504

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT; AMENDING TI-
2 TLE 33, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW CHAPTER 61, TITLE 33, IDAHO
3 CODE, TO ESTABLISH THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND TO
4 PROVIDE RULEMAKING AUTHORITY, TO DEFINE TERMS, TO PROVIDE DUTIES OF THE
5 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REGARDING
6 CRITICAL QUALITY EDUCATOR SHORTAGES, TO PROVIDE LOAN REPAYMENT ASSIS-
7 TANCE AND ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITERIA AND TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDING AND
8 PRIORITIES; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING A SUNSET DATE.
9

10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

11 SECTION 1. That Title 33, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended
12 by the addition thereto of a NEW CHAPTER, to be known and designated as Chap-
13 ter 61, Title 33, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

14 CHAPTER 61

15 QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT

16 33-6101. QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM -- RULEMAKING. A
17 quality educator loan assistance program as set forth in this chapter shall
18 be administered by the state board of education. The program shall provide
19 for the direct repayment of educational loans of eligible quality educators.
20 The state board of education shall promulgate rules to implement the provi-
21 sions of this chapter.

22 33-6102. DEFINITIONS. As used in this chapter:

23 (1) "Educational loans" means all loans made pursuant to a federal loan
24 program, except federal parent loans for undergraduate students (PLUS), as
25 provided in 20 U.S.C. 1078-2.

26 (2) "Federal loan program" means educational loans authorized by 20
27 U.S.C. 1071 et seq., 20 U.S.C. 1087a et seq., and 20 U.S.C. 1087aa et seq.

28 (3) "Quality educator" means a full-time, standard certificated indi-
29 vidual employed as an instructional or pupil service employee in an Idaho
30 school district or at a public charter school.

31 33-6103. CRITICAL QUALITY EDUCATOR SHORTAGES. (1) The state board of
32 education in cooperation with the state department of education shall iden-
33 tify specific schools that are impacted by critical quality educator short-
34 ages using the following criteria:

35 (a) Rural isolation of the school pursuant to section 33-319, Idaho
36 Code; and

37 (b) Economic disadvantage of the school based on eligibility for funds
38 under title I, part A of the federal elementary and secondary education
39 act, as amended.

1 (2) The state department of education shall publish an annual report
2 that lists eligible schools identified as impacted by critical quality edu-
3 cator shortages, which report shall explain the reasons for such identifi-
4 cations and provide information regarding any success in retention at such
5 schools.

6 (3) Quality educators who are employed at schools identified in sub-
7 section (1) of this section are eligible for repayment of all or part of any
8 such educator's outstanding educational loans existing at the time of appli-
9 cation in accordance with the eligibility and award criteria established in
10 this chapter up to the amount specified in section 33-6104, Idaho Code, and
11 in rules promulgated by the state board of education.

12 33-6104. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE -- ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITE-
13 RIA. (1) Loan repayment assistance may be provided on behalf of a quality
14 educator who:

15 (a) Is employed in an identified school described in section 33-6103,
16 Idaho Code; and

17 (b) Has an educational loan that is not in default and that has a minimum
18 unpaid current balance of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) at the
19 time of application.

20 (2) In order to qualify for loan repayment assistance under this chap-
21 ter, a quality educator shall submit an application to the state board of ed-
22 ucation in accordance with rules promulgated by the state board. The appli-
23 cation shall include official verification or proof of the applicant's total
24 unpaid accumulated educational loan debt and any other documentation as re-
25 quired by the state board for verification of the applicant's eligibility.

26 (3) A quality educator is eligible for loan repayment assistance for up
27 to four (4) years. The total annual loan repayment assistance for an eligi-
28 ble quality educator may not exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000).

29 (4) The state board may remit payment of the loan on behalf of the qual-
30 ity educator in accordance with the requirements of this chapter and rules
31 promulgated by the state board.

32 (5) Subject to available funds, loan repayment assistance may be pro-
33 vided to up to five hundred (500) quality educators per year.

34 33-6105. FUNDING -- PRIORITIES. (1) If the funding for the quality ed-
35 ucator loan assistance program in any year is less than the total amount nec-
36 essary to provide loan repayment assistance to five hundred (500) quality
37 educators, or less than the total amount necessary to provide loan repay-
38 ment assistance to all quality educators who apply if fewer than five hundred
39 (500) apply, then the state board of education shall provide preference in
40 the award of loan repayment assistance to quality educators who work in spe-
41 cific schools that are most impacted by quality educator shortages.

42 (2) The state board of education shall define the criteria for deter-
43 mining the schools that are most impacted by quality educator shortages.

44 (3) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to require the provision of
45 loan repayment assistance without an appropriation for that purpose.

46 SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this act are hereby declared
47 to be severable and if any provision of this act or the application of such
48 provision to any person or circumstance is declared invalid for any reason,

1 such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of
2 this act.

3 SECTION 3. The provisions of Section 1 of this act shall be null, void
4 and of no force and effect on and after July 1, 2023. Loan repayment assis-
5 tance for applications approved prior to July 1, 2023 shall be honored as
6 provided in this act.