

HB 2335 -- TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

SPONSOR: Nurrenbern

The bill changes the name of the "Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship Program" to the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program". The corresponding state treasury fund is also renamed accordingly.

The bill provides that scholarship funds may be used to cover up to 100% of the cost of tuition, university-charged fees, and other costs directly associated with teacher preparation, as approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

The number of years a student may receive a scholarship is reduced from four to two years. The number of students who may receive a scholarship is increased from 100 to 200 in the 2025-26 academic year, with 20 more students being added in each subsequent year until 2030-31 and all subsequent academic years, when 300 students may receive scholarships.

Scholarship recipients after June 30, 2025, will sign a statement that they have made a good faith effort to secure all available Federal sources of grant funding.

The bill repeals a provision that a student must have attended a Missouri high school in order to be eligible for a scholarship. To be eligible for a scholarship, recipients must sign an agreement to student teach at, apply for, interview for, and accept a position, if offered, in a Missouri public school that is a hard-to-staff school or to teach at least one hard-to-staff subject area in a Missouri public school, or both, for two years for every one year the recipient receives a scholarship.

The bill defines a "hard-to-staff school" as an attendance center where the percentage of certificated positions that were left vacant or were filled with a teacher not fully qualified in the prior academic year exceeds 5% as reported to DESE. A "hard-to-staff subject area" is defined as a content area for which positions were left vacant or were filled with a teacher not fully qualified in the prior academic year.

The scholarships provided in the bill will be available to students who have successfully completed 48 credit hours at an institution of higher education.

The bill modifies the interest rate paid by scholarship recipients who do not follow through on their agreement to teach in a hard-to-staff subject or school and must therefore repay their scholarship award as a loan.

An individual who has qualified as an eligible student under the bill will continue to qualify as an eligible student as long as he or she remains employed by the school district in which he or she agreed to teach, regardless of whether his or her employing school no longer qualifies as a hard-to-staff school, the class he or she

teaches no longer qualifies as a hard-to-staff subject area, or his or her position within the school district changes.
This bill is similar to HB 2092 and SB 1013 (2024) and HCS HB 497 (2023).