

HOUSE BILL 1848

By Johnson G

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 4, Part 9, relative to the Tennessee rural
teachers scholarship.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 9, is amended by
adding the following language as a new section:

49-4-923.

(a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Tennessee Rural
Teachers Scholarship Act”.

(b)

(1) As used in this section, “rural county” means a county that is primarily
rural and in which the LEAs located in the county have difficulty in attracting
teachers to teach in the public schools.

(2) THEC shall determine each year which counties qualify as rural
counties and notify the eligible postsecondary institutions of the identification of
those counties. THEC and TSAC shall post the list on their web sites.

(c) To be eligible for the Tennessee rural teachers scholarship, a student shall:

(1) Not be ineligible for a scholarship under § 49-4-904;

(2) Meet the requirements of § 49-4-905(a)(1) and (3);

(3) Be enrolled at an eligible postsecondary institution in:

(A) Teacher preparation program; or

(B) A program of study leading to admission to a teacher
preparation program;

(4)

(A) If the student is an entering freshman and:

(i) If the student graduated from an eligible high school:

(a) Achieve a final overall weighted high school grade point average of at least 3.25; or

(b) Attain a composite ACT score of at least 25 on any single ACT test date or a comparable combined SAT score on any single SAT test date; or

(ii) If the student completed high school in a Tennessee home school program or graduated from a high school located in Tennessee that is not an eligible high school or is a nontraditional student, attain a composite ACT score of at least 25 on any single ACT test date or a comparable combined SAT score on any single SAT test date; or

(B) If the student is not an entering freshman, meet the continuation requirements of § 49-4-911 for the number of semester hours the student has attempted that are applicable to Tennessee HOPE scholarship recipients;

(5) Not have obtained a baccalaureate or higher degree;

(6) Agree to teach in a Tennessee public school in a rural area one (1) year for each year of receipt of the scholarship after receipt of licensure; and

(7) Make application for the scholarship.

(d) A student may apply for the Tennessee rural teachers scholarship as an entering freshman or at any time before the occurrence of a terminating event under subsection (f).

(e) To continue to receive the scholarship after the initial receipt, a scholarship recipient shall meet the continuation requirements of § 49-4-911 that are applicable to Tennessee HOPE scholarship recipients.

(f) A student may receive a Tennessee rural teachers scholarship until the occurrence of one (1) of the terminating events in § 49-4-913, as applicable to the student.

(g) Students applying for the Tennessee rural teachers scholarship who are also eligible for the Tennessee HOPE scholarship, the Tennessee HOPE scholarship for nontraditional students, the Tennessee foster child tuition grant, the ASPIRE award or the general assembly merit scholarship may receive all scholarships for which they are eligible.

(h)

(1) A scholarship recipient shall sign a promissory note each year the scholarship is awarded that stipulates the cash repayment obligation incurred if the teaching service is not fulfilled. If a scholarship recipient fails to complete the teacher preparation program in which the recipient is enrolled, fails to obtain licensure or fails to teach in a rural county for the number of years required to fulfill the recipient's obligation pursuant to the award of a Tennessee rural teachers scholarship, then all funds obtained from the award of the scholarship shall be repaid with interest as determined by TSAC; provided, however, that no repayment shall be due if TSAC finds that it is impossible for the recipient to fulfill the service obligation because of death or permanent disability of the recipient.

(2) If a teacher who received a Tennessee rural teachers scholarship begins teaching in an LEA in a rural county that later no longer qualifies as a rural county, the teacher may continue to teach in that LEA and such service

shall be considered qualified teaching service for the purposes of repayment of the scholarship.

(i) Subject to the amounts appropriated by the general assembly, and any provision of law relating to a shortfall in funds available for postsecondary financial assistance from the net proceeds of the state lottery, a Tennessee rural teachers scholarship shall be two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for the 2014-2015 academic year. For academic years subsequent to the 2014-2015 academic year, the amount of such scholarship shall be determined in accordance with § 4-51-111 and shall be set in the general appropriations act.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it, and shall apply to students seeking postsecondary financial assistance from net lottery proceeds in the 2014-2015 academic year and academic years thereafter.