

1 AN ACT concerning higher education student assistance.

2 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
3 represented in the General Assembly:

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act
5 is amended by adding Section 65.27 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/65.27 new)

7 Sec. 65.27. Teach Illinois Scholarship Program.

8 (a) For the purposes of this Section:

9 "Area of identified staff shortage" means a school
10 district in which the number of teachers is insufficient to
11 meet student or school district demand, as determined by the
12 State Board of Education.

13 "Qualified institution of higher learning" means one of
14 the universities listed in Section 65.40 of this Act.

15 (b) The Commission shall implement and administer a
16 teacher scholarship program, to be known as the Teach
17 Illinois Scholarship Program. The Commission shall annually
18 award scholarships to persons preparing to teach in areas of
19 identified staff shortages. These scholarships shall be
20 issued to individuals who make application to the Commission
21 and who agree to take courses at qualified institutions of
22 higher learning that will prepare them to teach in areas of
23 identified staff shortages.

24 (c) Scholarships awarded under this Section shall be
25 issued pursuant to rules promulgated by the Commission.

26 (d) Each scholarship shall be utilized by its holder for
27 the payment of tuition and non-revenue bond fees at any
28 qualified institution of higher learning. Such tuition and
29 fees shall be available only for courses that will enable the
30 individual to be certified to teach in areas of identified
31 staff shortages. The Commission shall determine which

1 courses are eligible for tuition payments under this Section.

2 (e) The Commission may make tuition payments directly to
3 the qualified institution of higher learning that the
4 individual attends for the courses prescribed or may make
5 payments to the individual. Any individual who received
6 payments and who fails to enroll in the courses prescribed
7 shall refund the payments to the Commission.

8 (f) Following the completion of the program of study,
9 the individual must accept employment to teach in an
10 elementary or secondary school in Illinois in an area of
11 identified staff shortage for a period of at least 5 years.
12 Individuals who fail to comply with this provision shall
13 refund all of the awarded scholarships to the Commission,
14 whether payments were made directly to the institutions of
15 higher learning or to the individuals, and this condition
16 shall be agreed to in writing by all scholarship recipients
17 at the time the scholarship is awarded. No individual shall
18 be required to refund tuition payments if his or her failure
19 to obtain employment as a teacher in a school is the result
20 of financial conditions within school districts. The rules
21 promulgated as provided in this Section shall contain
22 provisions regarding the waiving and deferral of such
23 payments.

24 (g) The Commission, with the cooperation of the State
25 Board of Education, shall assist individuals who have
26 participated in the scholarship program established by this
27 Section in finding employment in areas of identified staff
28 shortages.

29 (h) Appropriations for the scholarships outlined in this
30 Section shall be made to the Commission by the General
31 Assembly.