GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 241

Short Title:	Fund NBPTS Certification Fee/Pilot.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Representatives Elmore, Clemmons, Hurley, and Torbett (Primary Sponsors). *For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*	
Referred to:	Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	

March 9, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FORGIVABLE LOANS FOR TEACHERS IN CERTAIN SCHOOLS TO OBTAIN NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS CERTIFICATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Program Established. – Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-296.2, the Department of Public Instruction shall establish a pilot program to provide a forgivable loan to teachers employed in a qualifying public school during the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium to finance the cost of the participation fee for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification.

SECTION 2. Definitions. – The following definitions shall apply in this act:

(1) Public school. – Any of the following:
   a. A school in a local school administrative unit.
   b. A charter school.
   c. A regional school.
   d. A school providing elementary or secondary instruction operated by one of the following:
      1. The State Board of Education under Article 7A or Article 9C of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes.
      2. The University of North Carolina under Articles 4, 29, and 29A of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes.

(2) Qualifying public school. – A public school that meets any of the following criteria:
   a. Is identified as a low-performing school pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.37 or G.S. 115C-218.94.
   b. Is identified as an innovative school pursuant to G.S. 115C-75.5.
   c. Enrolled a student body in the school year prior to the teacher's application consisting of at least ten percent (10%) of students identified as at-risk pursuant to State Board of Education policy DROP-001.

SECTION 3. Loan Applications and Approval. – During the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, a teacher employed in a qualifying public school may apply to the Department of Public Instruction to receive a forgivable loan to finance the cost of the participation fee for NBPTS certification. The Department shall develop criteria and guidelines for administering the program. The criteria shall include at least the following requirements:

(1) The Department shall prioritize the award of loans to teachers based on the need of the school where the teacher is employed at the time of the application, including at least the following criteria:

a. A teacher employed in a qualifying public school with more qualifying factors, as identified in sub-subdivisions a. through c. of subdivision (2) of Section 2 of this act, shall receive priority over a teacher employed in a qualifying public school with fewer qualifying factors.

b. For teachers employed in qualifying schools pursuant to sub-subdivision c. of subdivision (2) of Section 2 of this act, teachers employed in schools with a higher percentage of at-risk students shall receive priority over teachers employed in schools with a lower percentage of at-risk schools.

(2) A teacher who completes the NBPTS certification process, regardless of whether the teacher actually receives certification, shall have his or her loan forgiven if that teacher remains teaching in a qualifying public school for at least four years from the date the teacher completes the process.

(3) A teacher who does not complete the certification process shall not have his or her loan forgiven except as provided in subdivision (4) of this section.

(4) A teacher who is unable to remain teaching in a qualifying public school for at least four years from the date the teacher receives certification or who does not complete the certification process may nonetheless have his or her loan forgiven in either of the following circumstances:

a. The teacher is unable to complete the certification process or continue teaching in a qualifying public school due to the death of the teacher or a newly acquired disability of the teacher.

b. Upon the application of the teacher, the Department may forgive the loan if the Department finds that the teacher is unable to complete the process or continue teaching in a qualifying public school due to the illness of the teacher, the death or catastrophic illness of a member of the teacher's immediate family, parental leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, or other extraordinary circumstances.

SECTION 4. Report. – No later than January 15, 2022, and each subsequent year thereafter in which funds appropriated pursuant to this act remain available, the Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the impact of the program, including at least the following information:

(1) Number of applicants and recipients of forgivable loans.

(2) Demographic information of recipients of forgivable loans.

(3) Employment status of recipients of forgivable loans, including the identity of any public school where the recipient is employed and whether the recipient remains employed with his or her original qualifying public school.

(4) Licensure area of recipients of forgivable loans.

(5) Effect of the program on the performance and growth of students taught by recipients.

SECTION 5. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to provide teachers with forgivable loans for the cost of the participation fee for NBPTS certification pursuant to this act. These funds shall not revert at the end of each fiscal year, but shall remain available until expended.

SECTION 6. This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.