

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

H.B. 1047
May 2, 2024
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH40595-MTa-244

Short Title: DRIVE Recommendations/Teacher Diversity. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Hawkins.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT VARIOUS INITIATIVES AND PROGRAM EXPANSIONS TO
PROMOTE TEACHER DIVERSITY AND INCREASE TEACHER RECRUITMENT, AS
RECOMMENDED BY THE GOVERNOR'S DRIVE TASK FORCE REPORT, AND TO
APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THESE PURPOSES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS/TEACHER RECRUITMENT MODELS

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year for research-based Grow-Your-Own and 2+2 programs in all regions of the State, including high school-based career academy programs, the North Carolina Teacher Cadet Program, Teaching as a Profession, and the TAs to Teachers and Troops to Teacher programs.

PART II. DEVELOPING A REPRESENTATIVE AND INCLUSIVE VISION FOR THE EDUCATION (DRIVE) GRANT PROGRAM

SECTION 2.(a) Purpose. – The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Office of the Governor, The University of North Carolina System Office, and the Community College System Office, shall establish a grant program to support strategic partnerships committed to increasing the pipeline of educators of color across the State. As an extension of the recommendations and strategies presented by the Governor's DRIVE Task Force on January 1, 2021, the grants shall be provided to local school administrative units, institutions of higher education, and community organizations to implement innovative initiatives that support the recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators. The purpose of this program shall be to do at least the following:

- (1) Increase the diversity of the educator workforce across the State through novel recruitment efforts.
- (2) Strengthen the pipeline of aspiring teachers of color across the State through traditional and alternative certification pathways.
- (3) Provide mechanisms to support and retain educators of color currently serving in elementary and secondary public schools.
- (4) Promote collaboration between school systems, institutions of higher education, and community and nonprofit organizations to diversify the educator workforce.



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SECTION 2.(b) Applications. – Applicants for grants shall demonstrate at least the following for grant award consideration:

- (1) A partnership between at least two of the following entities: local school administrative units, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Historically Minority-Serving Institutions, educator preparation programs, alternative certification programs, public and private colleges and universities, community colleges, and community or nonprofit organizations.
- (2) Proposals for strategies that address one or more of the following components of the educator development continuum as highlighted by the DRIVE Task Force's 2021 Report to the Governor: recruitment, placement and induction, and support and retention of educators of color.

SECTION 2.(c) Use of Funds. – Grant funds may be used for the following activities:

- (1) Strengthening existing high school dual enrollment programs to offer education-based college credit or honors courses as streamlined pathways for future careers in education.
- (2) Implementing targeted school system-level and community-based recruitment programs for aspiring educators of color interested in traditional and alternative educator preparation programs.
- (3) Utilizing and leveraging existing financial aid programs that include scholarships, loan forgiveness, and tuition reimbursement that reduce the disproportionate financial burden incurred by aspiring candidates of color.
- (4) Increasing preparation and supporting pre-service educators of color through paid clinical learning experiences, with a commitment to teaching in North Carolina public schools.
- (5) Offering support for job placement and licensure for candidates of color after completing their educator preparation program.
- (6) Providing induction and mentoring programs that address the needs of educators of color that include sustaining networking and professional learning communities or affinity groups.
- (7) Encouraging and financially supporting educators of color interested in joining national professional organizations or attending national conferences.

SECTION 2.(d) Request for Proposal. – By October 1, 2024, the State Board of Education shall issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the grant program. Applicants shall submit their proposals by December 1, 2024. The RFP shall require that proposals include the following information at a minimum:

- (1) Description of the proposal.
- (2) Evidence-based research that supports the proposal.
- (3) An implementation time line for the plan.
- (4) Plans for financial sustainability once grant money is no longer available.

SECTION 2.(e) Selection. – By February 1, 2025, a selection committee shall select up to five grantees, making the effort to ensure that there is representation across the State as reflected by rural and urban districts, institutions of higher education, and community-based partners. Any grants awarded may be spent over a five-year period from the initial award. Grants may be awarded for new or existing projects.

SECTION 2.(f) Reporting Requirements. – No later than September 1 of each year, grant recipients shall submit to the State Board of Education an annual report for the preceding grant year that describes the implementation of the program. This report must include qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate program effectiveness.

SECTION 2.(g) Evaluation and Reporting. – Of the funds appropriated by this section, the State Board of Education may use up to three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000)

to contract with an independent research organization to evaluate the impact of this grant program. The independent research organization shall report the results of this evaluation to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Fiscal Research Division of the General Assembly, and the Office of State Budget and Management by September 1, 2026. The State Board of Education shall report annually on the implementation of this grant program beginning on January 1, 2026.

SECTION 2.(h) Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to implement the grant program in accordance with this section.

SECTION 2.(i) Carryforward. – Any unexpended funds at the end of each fiscal year from the funds appropriated for the grant program under this section shall not revert to the General Fund but shall remain available for expenditure for the purposes set forth in this section.

PART III. RECRUITMENT BONUS PILOT PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS IN LOW-WEALTH, LOW-PERFORMING, OR HIGH-NEEDS SCHOOLS

SECTION 3.(a) Purpose. – The State Board of Education shall establish a grant program to assist local school administrative units in providing multiyear recruitment bonuses to certified teachers who commit to teach multiple years in a low-performing or high-needs school. Bonuses awarded as part of this grant program shall include, but are not limited to, the following components:

- (1) Awards over multiple years with a requirement that teachers remain in the school over multiple years to receive the bonus.
- (2) Awards to licensed teachers who commit to teach in a school identified as low-performing, as defined in G.S. 115C-105.37, a school identified as continually low-performing as defined in G.S. 115C-105.37A, or a school with an identified student percentage (ISP) of seventy-five percent (75%) or greater as used in the National School Lunch Program for qualification for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program.

SECTION 3.(b) Request for Proposal. – By September 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the State Board of Education shall issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the grant program. Local boards of education shall submit their proposals by December 1, 2024. The RFP shall require that proposals include the following information at a minimum:

- (1) Description of the proposal, including details on targeted schools for the bonuses and how the bonus program will be structured.
- (2) Evidence-based research that supports the proposal.
- (3) Implementation time line for the plan.
- (4) Plans for financial sustainability once grant money is no longer available.

SECTION 3.(c) Grant Awards. – By February 15, 2025, the State Board of Education shall review the proposals submitted by local boards of education and shall select up to 10 local school administrative units for grant awards. The State Board of Education may make grant awards for up to three years. A local school administrative unit may not receive more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in a single fiscal year from the grant program.

SECTION 3.(d) Evaluation and Reporting. – Of the funds appropriated by this section, the State Board of Education may use up to three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) to contract with an independent research organization to evaluate the impact of this grant program. The independent research organization shall report the results of this evaluation to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Fiscal Research Division of the General Assembly, and the Office of State Budget and Management by September 1, 2027. The Department of Public Instruction shall report annually on the implementation of this grant program, beginning March 1, 2025.

SECTION 3.(e) Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to implement the grant program in accordance with this section.

SECTION 3.(f) Carryforward. – Any unexpended funds appropriated under this section at the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund but shall remain available for the purposes set forth in this section.

PART IV. TEACHER PREPARATION RESIDENCY PILOT GRANT PROGRAM

SECTION 4.(a) Purpose. – The State Board of Education shall establish a grant program to assist local school administrative units in the development of teacher preparation residency pilot programs. Teacher preparation residency programs provide the necessary preparation and induction supports to teacher preparation candidates pursuing a continuing professional license. Teacher preparation residency programs eligible to receive grant funding through this program shall include, at a minimum, the following components:

- (1) Coursework in the candidate's area of licensure.
- (2) Tuition and stipends.
- (3) Faculty advising.
- (4) Clinical training experiences.
- (5) Ongoing induction support.

Residency programs eligible for this grant program may include partnerships between local school administrative units, educator preparation programs, local community college or universities, and other community organizations. Grant funds awarded to local school administrative units under this program shall be matched by the local school administrative unit on the basis of one dollar (\$1.00) in nongrant funds for every one dollar (\$1.00) in grant funds.

SECTION 4.(b) Request for Proposal. – By October 1, 2024, the State Board of Education shall issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the grant program. Local boards of education shall submit their proposals by January 15, 2025. The RFP shall require that proposals include the following information at a minimum:

- (1) Description of the proposal, including the number of teacher preparation candidates to be served.
- (2) Evidence-based research that supports the proposal.
- (3) Implementation time line for the plan.
- (4) Plans for financial sustainability once grant money is no longer available.

SECTION 4.(c) Grant Awards. – By April 15, 2025, the State Board of Education shall review the proposals submitted by local boards of education and shall select up to 10 local school administrative units for grant awards. The State Board of Education may make grant awards for up to three years. A local school administrative unit may not receive more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in a single fiscal year from this grant program.

SECTION 4.(d) Evaluation and Reporting. – Of the funds appropriated by this section, the State Board of Education may use up to three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) to contract with an independent research organization to evaluate the impact of this grant program. The independent research organization shall report the results of this evaluation to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Fiscal Research Division of the General Assembly, and the Office of State Budget and Management by September 1, 2028. The Department of Public Instruction shall report annually on the implementation of this grant program beginning by March 1, 2026.

SECTION 4.(e) Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to implement the grant program in accordance with this section.

SECTION 4.(f) Carryforward. – Any unexpended funds appropriated under this section at the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund but shall remain available for the purposes set forth in this section.

PART V. EXPANSION OF FELS PROGRAM/ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY

SECTION 5.1. G.S. 116-209.45(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Eligibility for Loans. – The Authority shall establish the criteria for initial and continuing eligibility to participate in the Program. All loan recipients shall be residents of North Carolina and shall attend an eligible institution.

The Authority shall adopt standards deemed appropriate by the Authority to ensure that only qualified, potential recipients receive a loan under the Program. The standards may include minimum grade point average and satisfactory academic progress. The Authority shall include individuals currently holding a bachelor's degree seeking preparation for teacher licensure as potential recipients to receive a loan under the Program."

SECTION 5.2. G.S. 116-209.45(g) reads as rewritten:

"(g) Advisory Group. – The Authority shall appoint an advisory group composed of, at minimum, appropriate representatives from higher education institutions and health and labor departments, agencies, or commissions to make recommendations to the Authority regarding the Authority's future apportionment and distribution of Program loans based on projected labor market shortages, higher education enrollment projections, and other relevant information. The Advisory Group shall also make recommendations to the Authority regarding strategies to encourage participation in the Program for potential recipients of color, specifically among individuals pursuing teacher licensure."

PART VI. EXPAND NC TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM

SECTION 6.(a) Part 3 of Article 23 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes reads as rewritten:

"Part 3. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

"§ 116-209.60. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Part:

- (1) Commission. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission.
- (2) Director. – The Director of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.
- (3) Forgivable loan. – A forgivable loan made under the Program.
- (4) Program. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.
- (5) Public school. – An elementary or secondary school located in North Carolina that is governed by a local board of education, charter school board of directors, regional school board of directors, or University of North Carolina laboratory school board of trustees.
- (5a) ~~Qualifying licensure area. – A teacher licensure area in one of the following subjects:~~
 - a. ~~Either of the following, as identified pursuant to G.S. 116-209.62(h):~~
 1. ~~Special education.~~
 2. ~~STEM.~~
 - b. ~~Elementary education (K-6).~~
- (5b) Qualifying teacher. – A teacher in a North Carolina public school who meets the following criteria:
 - a. Received a forgivable loan under the Program.
 - b. Graduated within 10 years from an educator preparation program leading to teacher licensure, excluding any authorized deferment for extenuating circumstances.
- (6) ~~STEM. – Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.~~

(7) Trust Fund. – The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program Trust Fund.

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"§ 116-209.62. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program established; administration.

(a) Program. – There is established the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program to be administered by the System Office of The University of North Carolina, in conjunction with the Authority and the Commission. The purpose of the Program is to recruit, prepare, and support students residing in or attending institutions of higher education located in North Carolina for preparation as highly effective teachers ~~in qualifying licensure areas~~ in the State's public schools. The Program shall be used to provide a forgivable loan to individuals interested in preparing to teach in the public schools of the ~~State in qualifying licensure areas~~ State.

(b) Trust Fund. – There is established the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program Trust Fund to be administered by the Authority, in conjunction with the System Office of The University of North Carolina. All funds (i) appropriated to, or otherwise received by, the Program for forgivable loans and other Program purposes, (ii) received as repayment of forgivable loans, and (iii) earned as interest on these funds shall be placed in the Trust Fund. The purpose of the Trust Fund is to provide financial assistance to qualified students for completion of teacher education and licensure programs to ~~fill qualifying licensure areas~~ teach in the public schools of the State.

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(d) Director of the Program. – The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall appoint a Director of the Program. The Director shall appoint staff to the Commission and shall be responsible for recruitment and coordination of the Program, including proactive, aggressive, and strategic recruitment of potential recipients. Efforts shall include identifying and encouraging student of color and students who may not otherwise consider a career in teaching to enter the program. Recruitment activities shall include a broad-based strategy (i) targeting regions of the State with the highest teacher attrition rates and teacher recruitment ~~challenges, challenges and~~ (ii) actively engaging with educators, business leaders, experts in human resources, elected officials, and other community leaders throughout the ~~State, and~~ (iii) ~~attracting candidates in qualifying licensure areas to the Program. State to attract a diverse pool of applicants.~~ The Director shall report to the President of The University of North Carolina. The Authority shall provide office space and clerical support staff, as necessary, to the Director for the Program.

(e) Student Selection Criteria for Forgivable Loans. – The Commission shall adopt stringent standards for awarding forgivable loans based on multiple measures to ensure that only the strongest applicants receive them, including the following:

(1) Grade point averages.

(2) Performance on relevant career and college readiness assessments.

(3) Experience, accomplishments, and other criteria demonstrating qualities positively correlated with highly effective teachers, including excellent verbal and communication skills.

(4) Demonstrated commitment to serve in ~~a qualifying licensure area in~~ North Carolina public schools.

(f) Program Selection Criteria. – The Authority shall administer the Program in cooperation with ~~up to 10 any~~ institutions of higher education with approved a State Board of Education-approved educator preparation ~~programs-program~~ selected by the Commission that represent a diverse selection of both postsecondary constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina and private postsecondary institutions operating in the State. ~~The Commission shall adopt stringent standards for selection of the most effective educator preparation programs, including the following:~~

(1) ~~Demonstrates high rates of educator effectiveness on value-added models and teacher evaluations, including using performance-based, subject-specific~~

assessment and support systems, such as edTPA or other metrics of evaluating candidate effectiveness that have predictive validity.

(2) ~~Demonstrates measurable impact of prior graduates on student learning, including impact of graduates teaching in qualifying licensure areas.~~

(3) ~~Demonstrates high rates of graduates passing exams required for teacher licensure.~~

(4) ~~Provides curricular and co-curricular enhancements in leadership, facilitates learning for diverse learners, and promotes community engagement, classroom management, and reflection and assessment.~~

(5) ~~Requires at least a minor concentration of study in the subject area that the candidate may teach.~~

(6) ~~Provides early and frequent internship or practical experiences, including the opportunity for participants to perform practicums in diverse school environments.~~

(7) ~~Is approved by the State Board of Education as an educator preparation program.~~

(8) ~~For an educator preparation program enrolling loan recipients in a program of study leading to licensure in elementary education (K-6), provides training that is aligned with the Science of Reading in accordance with G.S. 115C-269.20. The Commission shall contract with a third party entity to biennially evaluate whether a program identified in this subdivision is providing training that is aligned with the Science of Reading.~~

(g) Awards of Forgivable Loans. – The Program shall provide forgivable loans to selected students to be used at up to 10 selected institutions for completion of a program leading to initial teacher licensure as follows:

- (1) North Carolina high school seniors. – Forgivable loans of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per semester for up to eight semesters.
- (2) Students applying for transfer to a selected educator preparation program at an institution of higher education. – Forgivable loans of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per semester for up to six semesters.
- (3) Individuals currently holding a bachelor's degree seeking preparation for teacher licensure. – Forgivable loans of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per semester for up to four semesters.
- (4) Students matriculating at institutions of higher education who are changing to an approved program of study at a selected educator preparation program. – Forgivable loans of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per semester for up to four semesters.

Forgivable loans may be used for tuition, fees, the cost of books, and expenses related to obtaining licensure.

~~(h) Identification of STEM and Special Education Licensure Areas. – The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall identify and provide to the Commission and the Authority a list of STEM and special education licensure areas and shall annually provide to the Commission the number of available positions in each qualifying licensure area relative to the number of current and anticipated teachers in that area of licensure. The Commission shall make the list of STEM and special education licensure areas readily available to applicants.~~

(i) Administration of Forgivable Loan Awards. – Upon the naming of recipients of the forgivable loans by the Commission, the Commission shall transfer to the Authority its decisions. The Authority, in coordination with the Director, shall perform all of the administrative functions necessary to implement this Part, which functions shall include rule making, disseminating information, acting as a liaison with participating institutions of higher education, implementing forgivable loan agreements, loan monitoring, loan cancelling through service and collection,

determining the acceptability of service repayment agreements, enforcing the agreements, and all other functions necessary for the execution, payment, and enforcement of promissory notes required under this Part.

(j) Annual Report. – The Commission, in coordination with the Authority, the Department of Public Instruction, and the selected educator education programs participating in the Program shall report no later than January 1, 2019, and annually thereafter, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee regarding the following:

(1) Forgivable loans awarded from the Trust Fund, including the following:

- a. Demographic information regarding recipients.
- b. Number of recipients by institution of higher education and program.
- c. Information on number of recipients by anticipated ~~qualifying~~ licensure area.

(2) Placement and repayment rates, including the following:

- a. Number of graduates who have been employed ~~in a qualifying licensure area~~ within two years of program completion.
- b. Number of graduates who accepted employment at a low-performing school identified under G.S. 115C-105.37 as part of their years of service.
- c. Number of graduates who have elected to do loan repayment and their years of service, if any, prior to beginning loan repayment.
- d. Number of graduates ~~employed in a qualifying licensure area~~ who have received an overall rating of at least accomplished and have met expected growth on applicable standards of the teacher evaluation instrument.
- e. Aggregate information on student growth and proficiency in courses taught by graduates who have fulfilled service requirements through ~~employment in a qualifying licensure area employment.~~

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SECTION 6.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program Trust Fund the sum of five million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$5,700,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to support an additional 490 teacher licensure candidates.

SECTION 6.(c) Subsection (a) of this section applies to applications for the award of funds beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year.

PART VII. PEPSC/EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM REPORTING CHANGES

SECTION 7.1. G.S. 115C-269.35(b) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(12a) The percentage of students of color enrolling in and completing the program. For the purposes of this subsection, a student of color means a student identifying as Hispanic, African American, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or of two or more races."

SECTION 7.2. G.S. 115C-269.50 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-269.50. EPP report ~~eards-cards~~; report on diversity.

(a) EPP Report Card. – The State Board shall create an annual report card for each EPP that, at a minimum, summarizes the information collected in the annual performance reports, as set forth in G.S. 115C-269.35(b). The report cards shall provide user-friendly access to the public, and shall provide the ability to easily compare annual report card information between EPPs, including performance and other data reported by each EPP, as provided in G.S. 115C-269.35(b). The State Board shall make the report cards available to the public through

the State Board's Internet Web site on an annual basis beginning December 15, 2019, and shall submit the report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee annually by that date.

(b) Annual Report on Diversity. – Each educator preparation program shall report to the State Board the following information on an annual basis regarding the diversity of identified persons disaggregated by the following diversity categories: race, sex, ethnicity, age, and disability status:

(1) Total number of identified persons.

(2) Retention rates of identified persons who are employees of the program.

(3) The number of students who complete the program, the number of graduates licensed in North Carolina, and the number of graduates employed in a public school unit.

(4) Qualitative data from identified persons on the diversity of the program, including applicable information on recruitment, educator preparation, retention, mobility, and turnover.

(5) Recommendations from the program to improve diversity of identified persons, including strategies to recruit and retain of a diverse pool of identified persons.

Beginning June 15, 2022, and every June 15 thereafter, the State Board shall collect the information from the annual report from the educator preparation programs under this subsection and report the results to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, disaggregated by diversity category:

(1) Statewide data for each educator preparation program.

(2) Recommendations from the State Board to improve diversity among identified persons in programs, including strategies to recruit and retain a diverse pool of identified persons."

PART VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 8. This act becomes effective July 1, 2024.