

Sen. Fenton, Dist 10
Sen. Soucy, Dist 18
Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13
Sen. Whitley, Dist 15
Sen. Prentiss, Dist 5
Sen. Altschiller, Dist 24
June 5, 2023
2023-2153s
10/08

Floor Amendment to HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL

1 Amend the bill by inserting after section 604 the following new section and renumbering the
2 effective date to be the last numbered section:

3
4 605 New Section; Department of Education; Rural and Underserved Area Educator Incentive
5 Program. Amend RSA 21-N by inserting after section 8-d (Recruitment of Educators) the following
6 new section:

7 21-N:8-e Rural and Underserved Area Educator Incentive Program.

8 I. In this section:

9 (a) "Department" means the department of education.

10 (b) "Division" means the division of educator support and higher education.

11 (c) "Commission" means the New Hampshire higher education commission.

12 (d) "Educational loans" means all loans made pursuant to a federal loan 26 program,
13 except federal parent loans for undergraduate students (PLUS), as provided in 20 U.S.C. section
14 1078-2.

15 (e) "Eligible educational expenses" means any outstanding loans payments made during
16 the school year.

17 (f) "Federal loan program" means educational loans authorized by 20 U.S.C. section 1071
18 et seq., 20 U.S.C. section 1087a et seq., and 20 U.S.C. section 1087aa et seq.

19 (g) "Rural and underserved area educator" means a full-time, credentialed individual
20 employed as an instructional or pupil service employee in an eligible public school district or at an
21 eligible chartered public school.

22 (h) "Rural school district" means:

23 (1) There are fewer than 20 enrolled students per square mile within the area
24 encompassed by the school district's boundaries; or

25 (2) The regional public health network in which a plurality of the school district's
26 market value for assessment purposes is located is deemed rural as defined by the department of
27 health and human services, division of public health.

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1 II. The department shall identify specific schools that are affected by critical educator
2 shortages using the following criteria:

3 (a) Rural isolation of the school; or

4 (b) Economic disadvantage of the school based on eligibility for funds pursuant to title I,
5 part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended.

6 III. Rural and underserved area educators who are employed at schools identified in
7 paragraph II shall be eligible for repayment of all or part of any such educator's outstanding
8 educational loans existing at the time of application in accordance with the eligibility and award
9 criteria established in this section up to the amount specified in this section, or repayment of eligible
10 education expenses established by the commission, and in rules adopted by the commission pursuant
11 to RSA 541-A.

12 IV. Loan repayment assistance or the reimbursement of eligible education expenses may be
13 provided on behalf of a rural and underserved area educator who:

14 (a) Is employed in a school identified in paragraph II;

15 (b) Has a signed contract with such school; and

16 (c) Has an educational loan that is not in default and that has a minimum unpaid
17 current balance of at least \$1,000 or has at least \$1,000 in eligible education expenses at the time of
18 application; or

19 (d) Has eligible education expenses that may be reimbursed pursuant to this section.

20 V. To qualify for loan repayment assistance or education expense reimbursement under this
21 section, a rural and underserved area educator shall submit an application to the commission. For
22 loan repayment applications, the application shall include official verification or proof of the
23 applicant's total unpaid accumulated educational loan debt and any other documentation as required
24 by the department for verification of the applicant's eligibility.

25 VI. A rural and underserved area educator shall be eligible for loan repayment assistance or
26 eligible educational expenses for up to 4 years, provided that the educator remains employed at the
27 same school or by the same school district. The department may remit payment of the loan on behalf
28 of the rural and underserved area educator in accordance with the requirements of this section and
29 rules adopted by the commission.

30 VII. The total incentive award shall be:

31 (a) In the amount of \$1,500 for the first year;

32 (b) In the amount of \$2,500 for the second year;

33 (c) In the amount of \$3,500 for the third year; and

34 (d) In the amount of \$4,500 for the fourth year.

35 VIII. The commission shall adopt rules pursuant to RSA 541-A to establish protocols for
36 determining the number of incentive awards that will be made annually based on available
37 appropriations for the program.

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1 IX. Incentive awards under this section shall be offered to the extent of available funding.

2 606 Rural and Underserved Area Educator Incentive Program; Appropriation. There is hereby
3 appropriated \$3,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 to the department of education,
4 division of educator support and higher education, for the purpose of funding the rural and
5 underserved, for the purpose of funding the rural and underserved area educator incentive program
6 established in RSA 21-N:8-e. All funds appropriated for the program shall be nonlapsing. The
7 governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sums out of any money in the treasury not
8 otherwise appropriated.

9 607 Effective Date.

10 I. Section 606 of this act shall take effect June 30, 2023.

11 II. Section 605 of this act shall take effect upon its passage.

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AMENDED ANALYSIS

Add:

206. Establishes the rural and underserved area educator incentive program and makes an appropriation therefor.