

AN ACT concerning education.

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

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

(110 ILCS 947/65.27 new)

Sec. 65.27. Teach Illinois Scholarship Program.

(a) For the purposes of this Section:

"Area of identified staff shortage" means a school district in which the number of teachers is insufficient to meet student or school district demand or a subject area for which the number of teachers who are qualified to teach that subject area is insufficient to meet student or school district demand, as determined by the State Board of Education.

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

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

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

(d) Each scholarship shall be utilized by its holder for the payment of tuition and non-revenue bond fees at any qualified institution of higher learning. Such tuition and fees shall be available only for courses that will enable the individual to be certified to teach in areas of identified

staff shortages. The Commission shall determine which courses are eligible for tuition payments under this Section.

(e) The Commission shall make tuition payments directly to the qualified institution of higher learning that the individual attends for the courses prescribed.

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

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

(h) The scholarships under this Section are subject to appropriations to the Commission by the General Assembly.