

1 HB175
2 205675-3
3 By Representative Lovvorn
4 RFD: Ways and Means Education
5 First Read: 02-FEB-21
6 PFD: 01/28/2021

1
2 ENROLLED, An Act,

3 Relating to the Alabama Math and Science Teacher
4 Education Program; to amend Sections 16-5-51, 16-5-52,
5 16-5-53, 16-5-54, and 16-5-55, Code of Alabama 1975, and to
6 add Sections 16-5-54.1, 16-5-54.2, and 16-5-56, to the Code of
7 Alabama 1975; to allow teachers certified in computer science
8 and certain qualified teachers certified in other fields, who
9 return to college to complete a program in math, science, or
10 computer science and obtain certification in any of those
11 fields, to qualify for the loan repayment program; to expand
12 the loan repayment program to teachers of math, science, or
13 computer science in failing schools; and to reduce the
14 teaching load requirement from a full-time teaching load of
15 math, science, or computer science courses to three-fourths of
16 the full-time teaching load being comprised of math, science,
17 or computer science courses for which the teacher is properly
18 certified.

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

20 Section 1. Sections 16-5-51, 16-5-52, 16-5-53,
21 16-5-54, and 16-5-55 of the Code of Alabama 1975, are amended
22 to read as follows:

23 "§16-5-51.

24 "The purpose of the Alabama Math and Science Teacher
25 Education Program is twofold:

1 "(1) To encourage individuals to enroll in and
2 complete programs leading to Alabama certification in
3 mathematics, science, or computer science.

4 "(2) To improve the educational system in Alabama by
5 encouraging those who complete the program to accept math,
6 science, or computer science teaching positions in Alabama
7 public schools, preferably in public school systems, including
8 charter schools, where the shortage of math, science, or
9 computer science teachers, or ~~both~~ any combination of the
10 three, is most acute, or in a school which has been designated
11 as a failing school, or any other term adopted to identify an
12 underperforming school, by the State Board of Education or the
13 Legislature.

14 "§16-5-52.

15 "For the purposes of this article, the following
16 terms shall have the following meanings:

17 "(1) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A state-supported
18 institution of higher education or a private nonprofit
19 institution of higher education that satisfies all of the
20 following:

21 "a. Is accredited by the Southern Association of
22 Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

23 "b. Is approved by the State Board of Education ~~or~~
24 ~~the State Department of Education~~ to prepare teachers of

1 middle level or secondary math, science, or computer science
2 or both.

3 "c. Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student
4 aid program funds.

5 "d. Maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.

6 "(2) CHARTER SCHOOL. A form of public school. A
7 teacher employed by a charter school accredited by the
8 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is eligible to
9 participate in the program. A teacher employed by a charter
10 school is not eligible for the acute shortage area supplement
11 provided in this article.

12 "~~(2)~~ (3) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher
13 Education.

14 "~~(3)~~ (4) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT. A person who satisfies
15 the criteria set out in this article and is eligible under
16 rules adopted by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

17 "~~(4)~~ (5) PROGRAM. The Alabama Math and Science
18 Teacher Education Program created by this article and
19 administered by the commission that provides loan repayments
20 to a teacher with a valid Alabama professional educator
21 certificate endorsed in math, science, or computer science who
22 teaches math, science, or computer science courses for which
23 the teacher is properly certified for three-fourths of the
24 full-time teaching load in the Alabama public school system.

1 "~~(5)~~(6) SCIENCE. Biology, chemistry, physics, and
2 general science.

3 "~~(6)~~(7) YEAR. A school year that shall be divided
4 into fall and spring semesters. The term does not mean
5 calendar, fiscal, or scholastic year.

6 "§16-5-53.

7 "~~(a)~~ The Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education
8 Program shall be administered by the commission, which may
9 adopt any rules necessary for the administration of the
10 program.

11 "~~(b)~~ ~~The commission shall adopt standards for~~
12 ~~awarding loan repayments to an Alabama public school teacher~~
13 ~~who satisfies all of the following:~~

14 "~~(1)~~ ~~Has graduated from an approved institution.~~

15 "~~(2)~~ ~~Holds a valid Alabama professional educator~~
16 ~~certificate endorsed in math or science.~~

17 "~~(3)~~ ~~Is teaching in an Alabama public school~~
18 ~~full-time in the field of math or science.~~

19 "~~(4)~~ ~~Is eligible to receive additional funds for~~
20 ~~teaching math or science in a public school in a geographic~~
21 ~~area with acute teacher shortages in math or science, or both.~~

22 "§16-5-54.

23 "(a) To be eligible for the base program of two
24 thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per semester for math
25 and science teachers and one thousand five hundred dollars

1 (\$1,500) per semester for computer science teachers, an
2 applicant shall satisfy all of the following:

3 "(1) Be a graduate of a State Board of Education ~~or~~
4 ~~State Department of Education~~ approved program in math,
5 science, or computer science, at the baccalaureate or master's
6 level, after the 2018 spring semester term, from an approved
7 Alabama institution ~~leading to~~ and hold an initial middle
8 level or secondary professional educator certificate endorsed
9 in math, science, or computer science that was issued based
10 upon completion of the approved program in math, science, or
11 computer science. A teacher who only earns a passing score on
12 the Praxis test in math, science, or computer science to add a
13 certificate endorsement for math, science, or computer
14 science, and who has not completed an entire approved program,
15 does not satisfy this requirement.

16 "(2) Holds a valid Alabama professional educator
17 certificate endorsed in middle level or secondary math,
18 science, or computer science, or ~~both~~ any combination of the
19 three.

20 "(3) Teaches a schedule in which at least
21 three-fourths of the full-time teaching load is comprised of
22 math, science, or computer science ~~full-time~~ in an Alabama
23 public school ~~district~~ system.

24 "(4) Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of
25 the United States.

1 "~~5) Has been~~ Is a resident of Alabama ~~for at least~~
2 ~~12 months before the application deadline~~ and provides
3 documentation proving a permanent connection to the State of
4 Alabama. The commission shall accept any one of the following
5 as proof of residency:

6 "a. A current valid Alabama driver's license.

7 "b. A current valid Alabama vehicle registration.

8 "c. A current valid Alabama voter registration card.

9 "(6) Has outstanding federal student loans,
10 subsidized or unsubsidized.

11 "(7) Satisfies additional continuing eligibility
12 criteria established by the commission.

13 "(b) In order to receive ~~a~~ an additional supplement
14 pursuant to this article, in addition to the criteria listed
15 in subsection (a), a recipient shall also teach math, science,
16 or computer science, or both any combination of the three, in
17 a ~~geographic area~~ public school system within the state with
18 an acute teacher shortage in math, science, or computer
19 science, or both any combination of the three, for which the
20 teacher is properly certified, as identified by the commission
21 in consultation with the State Department of Education or in a
22 school which has been designated as a failing school, or any
23 other term adopted to identify an underperforming school, by
24 the State Board of Education or the Legislature.

25 "§16-5-55.

1 "(a) The program shall be used to provide a loan
2 repayment for federal student loans in the following amounts:

3 "(1) Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per year, or two
4 thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per semester worked,
5 for a maximum of four consecutive years for a teacher with a
6 valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in
7 middle level or secondary math or science who graduated from a
8 teacher education program at an approved institution after the
9 2018 spring semester term and is teaching in an Alabama public
10 school. Three thousand dollars (\$3,000) per year, or one
11 thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) per semester worked,
12 for a maximum of four consecutive years for a teacher with a
13 valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in
14 computer science who graduated from a teacher education
15 program at an approved institution after the 2021 spring
16 semester term and is teaching in an Alabama public school.

17 "(2) An additional two thousand five hundred dollars
18 (\$2,500) per year, or one thousand two hundred fifty dollars
19 (\$1,250) per semester worked, for a maximum of four
20 consecutive years for a teacher who satisfies all criteria
21 listed in ~~Section~~ Sections 16-5-54, 16-5-54.1, and 16-5-54.2,
22 and who also is teaching math or science in a public school in
23 ~~an area of the state with acute teacher shortages in math or~~
24 ~~science, or both, in a geographic area~~ a school system within
25 the state with an acute teacher shortage in math or science,

1 or both, as identified by the commission in consultation with
2 the State Department of Education or in a school which has
3 been designated as a failing school, or any other term adopted
4 to identify an underperforming school by the State Board of
5 Education or the Legislature. An additional one thousand
6 dollars (\$1,000) per year, or five hundred dollars (\$500) per
7 semester worked, for a maximum of four consecutive years for a
8 teacher who satisfies all criteria listed in Sections 16-5-54,
9 16-5-54.1 and 16-5-54.2, and who also is teaching computer
10 science in a public school in a school system within the state
11 with an acute teacher shortage in computer science as
12 identified by the commission in consultation with the State
13 Department of Education or in a school which has been
14 designated as a failing school, or any other term adopted to
15 identify an underperforming school, by the State Board of
16 Education or the Legislature.

17 "(b) Loan repayment award recipients shall reapply
18 for the program annually.

19 "(c) Loan repayment awards shall be distributed
20 directly to the recipient teacher in two disbursements during
21 the applicable year: One disbursement after January 1 and the
22 second disbursement after June 1. Each recipient shall provide
23 documentation from the employing school ~~district~~ system as
24 proof that he or she has taught for a semester. If the award

1 amount is larger than the outstanding loan balance, the award
2 amount shall be reduced to the amount of the loan balance.

3 "(d) The requirements of this article are contingent
4 upon available funding for the program.

5 "(e) The commission shall determine the necessary
6 procedures for awarding loan repayments if the number of
7 eligible applicants and recipients exceeds available funding.

8 "(f) The recipient shall notify the commission in
9 writing of any change in status within 30 days after the
10 change. Failure to notify the commission of a change in status
11 shall affect future eligibility. All of the following
12 constitute a change in status:

13 "(1) A change in name.

14 "(2) A change in residence.

15 "(3) A change in employment status.

16 "(g) To receive a loan repayment check pursuant to
17 this article, a teacher shall register online with the state
18 Comptroller.

19 "(h) A loan repayment check is considered income by
20 the Internal Revenue Service, and recipients shall be made
21 aware of that fact.

22 "(i) Any funds appropriated to the program shall be
23 nonreverting.

24 "(j) Additional funds shall be made available to
25 teachers who also teach math, science, or computer science in

1 ~~areas~~ school systems of the state where the shortages of math,
2 science, or computer science teachers, or ~~both~~ any combination
3 of the three, are most severe. The commission, in consultation
4 with the State Department of Education, shall determine which
5 school systems in the state have the greatest shortage areas.

6 "(k) A recipient who receives a loan repayment award
7 and continues to satisfy employment criteria shall continue to
8 receive an award for the four-year limit regardless of whether
9 the employing school system retains its acute shortage
10 designation or the employing school is removed from the
11 failing school list. If a recipient leaves an acute shortage
12 system or a failing school, and accepts employment in a school
13 system or school that does not hold an acute shortage system
14 or failing school designation, the recipient shall no longer
15 qualify to receive supplemental funds."

16 Section 2. Sections 16-5-54.1, 16-5-54.2, and
17 16-5-56 are added to the Code of Alabama 1975, to read as
18 follow:

19 §16-5-54.1.

20 (a) Beginning in the fall semester of 2021, the
21 benefits outlined in subsection (a) of Section 16-5-54 shall
22 apply to the following eligible individuals, pending
23 authorization to teach in Alabama and subsequent employment in
24 an Alabama public school:

1 (1) An individual who graduated from a regionally
2 accredited college or university in Alabama or in another
3 state who is certified to teach math, science, or computer
4 science in another state, and who may or may not reside within
5 Alabama.

6 (2) An individual who resides in another state and
7 is a graduate of a State Board of Education approved program
8 in math, science, or computer science, at the baccalaureate or
9 master's level, after the 2021 spring semester term, from an
10 approved Alabama institution and who holds an initial
11 middle-level or secondary professional educator certificate
12 endorsed in math, science, or computer science that was issued
13 based upon completion of the approved program in math,
14 science, or computer science. A teacher who only earns a
15 passing score on the Praxis test in math, science, or computer
16 science to add a certificate endorsement for math, science, or
17 computer science and who has not completed an entire approved
18 program, does not satisfy this requirement.

19 (b) The individuals listed in subsection (a) shall
20 also satisfy all of the following criteria:

21 (1) Hold a valid Alabama professional educator
22 certificate endorsed in middle-level or secondary math,
23 science, or computer science, or any combination of the three.

24 (2) Teach a schedule in which at least three-fourths
25 of the full-time teaching load is comprised of math, science,

1 or computer science courses for which the teacher is properly
2 certified in an Alabama public school system.

3 (3) Be citizens or lawful permanent residents of the
4 United States.

5 (4) Have outstanding federal student loans,
6 subsidized or unsubsidized.

7 (5) Satisfy additional continuing eligibility
8 criteria established by the commission.

9 (c) In order to receive an additional supplement
10 pursuant to this article, in addition to the criteria listed
11 in subsections (a) and (b), a recipient shall also teach math,
12 science, or computer science courses, or any combination of
13 the three, for which he or she is properly certified, in a
14 school system within the state with an acute teacher shortage
15 in math, science, or computer science, or any combination of
16 the three, as identified by the commission in consultation
17 with the State Department of Education or in a school which
18 has been designated as a failing school, or any other term
19 subsequently adopted to identify underperforming schools, by
20 the State Board of Education or the Legislature.

21 §16-5-54.2.

22 Beginning after the 2021 spring semester, an
23 individual issued an Alabama bachelor's level professional
24 educator certificate in math, science, or computer science
25 upon completion of an alternative certification program

1 pursuant to Section 16-23-3, may be eligible for the program
2 if he or she satisfies all employment and teaching load
3 requirements provided in subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of
4 Section 16-5-54. The individual may only be reimbursed for
5 tuition and mandatory instructional fees for not more than 12
6 semester credit hours of the college courses required for
7 earning an alternative certificate in order to obtain a
8 professional educator certificate in math, science, or
9 computer science. The individual shall provide the State
10 Department of Education and the commission with documentation
11 concerning the cost incurred for the course work. These funds
12 are considered income by the Internal Revenue Service, and
13 recipients shall be made aware of that fact.

14 §16-5-56.

15 Any person or institution aggrieved by the actions
16 of the commission in its administration of the program, by
17 written petition filed with the commission within 30 days
18 after notice of the action complained of, may request a
19 rehearing by the commission. The commission shall schedule the
20 requested rehearing not less than 20, nor more than 30, days
21 after receipt of the petition. The aggrieved party may present
22 written and oral evidence supporting its petition and may be
23 represented by counsel. The decision of the commission
24 following the rehearing shall be final.

1 Section 3. This act shall become effective on the
2 first day of the third month following its passage and
3 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

