

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 271

BY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO EDUCATION; AMENDING TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A  
2 NEW CHAPTER 61, TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE QUALITY ED-  
3 UCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT, TO PROVIDE RULEMAKING, TO DEFINE  
4 TERMS, TO PROVIDE DUTIES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REGARDING  
5 CRITICAL QUALITY EDUCATOR SHORTAGES, TO PROVIDE LOAN REPAYMENT ASSIS-  
6 TANCE AND ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITERIA AND TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDING AND  
7 PRIORITIES; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING A SUNSET DATE.  
8

9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

10 SECTION 1. That Title 33, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended  
11 by the addition thereto of a NEW CHAPTER, to be known and designated as Chap-  
12 ter 61, Title 33, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

13 CHAPTER 61

14 QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT

15 33-6101. QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM -- RULEMAKING. A  
16 quality educator loan assistance program as set forth in this chapter shall  
17 be administered by the state board of education. The program shall provide  
18 for the direct repayment of educational loans of eligible quality educators.  
19 The state board of education shall promulgate rules to implement the provi-  
20 sions of this chapter.

21 33-6102. DEFINITIONS. As used in this chapter:

22 (1) "Educational loans" means all loans made pursuant to a federal loan  
23 program, except federal parent loans for undergraduate students (PLUS), as  
24 provided in 20 U.S.C. 1078-2.

25 (2) "Federal loan program" means educational loans authorized by 20  
26 U.S.C. 1071 et seq., 20 U.S.C. 1087a et seq., and 20 U.S.C. 1087aa et seq.

27 (3) "Quality educator" means a full-time certificated instructor with  
28 a current teaching certificate, pursuant to Idaho law, of a public school  
29 district, including charter districts.

30 33-6103. CRITICAL QUALITY EDUCATOR SHORTAGES. (1) The state depart-  
31 ment of education shall identify:

32 (a) Specific schools that are impacted by critical quality educator  
33 shortages using the following criteria:

34 (i) Rural isolation of the school pursuant to section 33-319,  
35 Idaho Code; and

36 (ii) Economic disadvantage of the school.

37 (b) Within such schools, the specific subject areas that are impacted  
38 by critical quality educator shortages.

1 (2) The state department shall publish an annual report that lists the  
2 schools and subject areas identified as impacted by critical quality educa-  
3 tor shortages, that explains the reasons for such identifications and that  
4 provides information regarding any success in retention at such schools.

5 (3) Quality educators who are employed at schools identified in sub-  
6 section (1) of this section are eligible for repayment of all or part of any  
7 such educator's outstanding educational loans existing at the time of appli-  
8 cation in accordance with the eligibility and award criteria established in  
9 this chapter and in rules promulgated by the state board of education.

10 33-6104. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE -- ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITE-  
11 RIA. (1) Loan repayment assistance may be provided on behalf of a quality  
12 educator who:

13 (a) Is employed in an identified school described in section 33-6103,  
14 Idaho Code; and

15 (b) Has an educational loan that is not in default and that has a minimum  
16 unpaid current balance of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) at the  
17 time of application.

18 (2) In order to qualify for loan repayment assistance under this chap-  
19 ter, a quality educator shall submit an application to the state board of ed-  
20 ucation in accordance with rules promulgated by the state board. The appli-  
21 cation shall include official verification or proof of the applicant's total  
22 unpaid accumulated educational loan debt and any other documentation as re-  
23 quired by the state board for verification of the applicant's eligibility.

24 (3) A quality educator is eligible for loan repayment assistance for up  
25 to four (4) years. The total annual loan repayment assistance for an eligi-  
26 ble quality educator may not exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000).

27 (4) The state board may remit payment of the loan on behalf of the qual-  
28 ity educator in accordance with the requirements of this chapter and rules  
29 promulgated by the state board.

30 33-6105. FUNDING -- PRIORITIES. (1) If the funding for the quality  
31 educator loan assistance program in any year is less than the total amount  
32 for which quality educators qualify, then the state board of education shall  
33 provide preference in the award of loan repayment assistance to quality  
34 educators who work in specific schools that are most impacted by quality  
35 educator shortages as identified in section 33-6103, Idaho Code.

36 (2) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to require the provision of  
37 loan repayment assistance without an appropriation for that purpose.

38 SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this act are hereby declared  
39 to be severable and if any provision of this act or the application of such  
40 provision to any person or circumstance is declared invalid for any reason,  
41 such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of  
42 this act.

43 SECTION 3. The provisions of Section 1 of this act shall be null, void  
44 and of no force and effect on and after July 1, 2022.