



AN ACT PROVIDING FOR LAWS ADDRESSING EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEMS IN RURAL MONTANA AND INDIAN COUNTRY; ESTABLISHING A MULTIFACETED GROW YOUR OWN GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN TEACHER PIPELINES; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

WHEREAS, Montana's rural schools in general, and schools in Indian Country in particular, struggle to recruit and retain teachers; and

WHEREAS, "Grow Your Own" programs show great promise in addressing teacher shortages in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, having Indian teachers to teach Indian children will help close the achievement gap and help fulfill Montana's commitment in its educational goals for the preservation of Indian cultural integrity; and

WHEREAS, strengthening the teacher pipeline for Montana's rural reservation schools will require collaborative efforts between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Grow your own grant program -- administration. (1) There is a grow your own grant program administered by the commissioner of higher education. The purpose of the grant program is to develop teacher pipelines aimed at serving rural and reservation school districts.

(2) (a) The grow your own grant program must involve:

- (i) the opportunity for students to take dual credit courses in education while in high school;
- (ii) the opportunity for students to engage in work-based learning opportunities in the field of education;

and

(iii) collaboration between school districts and institutions of higher education in developing a career pathway for education.

(b) The grant program must allow and encourage small and proximate districts to collaborate in developing their grow your own grant programs.

(c) A school district is eligible for the program if the district has one or more schools impacted by a quality educator shortage.

(d) A school district that is eligible for a grant under this section may be awarded a grant for up to 2 years to develop a grow your own grant program.

(3) Contingent on appropriation by the legislature, the commissioner shall create and administer:

(a) a grant program for eligible school districts to develop a grow your own grant program that encourages students to pursue a career in teaching;

(b) a grant program for tribal colleges, community colleges, and 2-year campuses to:

(i) pursue accreditation for teacher preparation programs in the specific licensure or endorsement areas that are most impacted by quality educator shortages; or

(ii) develop collaborative programs with 4-year institutions with accredited teacher preparation programs in the specific licensure or endorsement areas that are most impacted by quality educator shortages, with an emphasis on collaborative programs that can be conducted in a manner that does not require residency at the 4-year institution; and

(c) a grow your own grant scholarship program that provides a last-dollar grant of up to \$5,000 a year, not to exceed the cost of attendance, and not to exceed \$10,000 total for any student, to students who:

(i) have participated in a grow your own grant program, as described in subsection (3)(a), while in high school and have earned at least 6 postsecondary credits toward an education degree or are living in a community with a school impacted by a quality educator shortage;

(ii) are currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program in a licensure or endorsement area identified as most impacted by quality educator shortages; and

(iii) commit to teaching in a school impacted by a quality educator shortage.

(4) The commissioner shall convert a grant under subsection (3)(c) to a loan if the recipient of the grant:

- (i) is not licensed in a licensure or endorsement area identified as most impacted by quality educator shortages within 5 years of receiving a grant; or
 - (ii) does not teach for 3 or more years in a school impacted by a quality educator shortage and in a licensure or endorsement area identified as most impacted by quality educator shortages within 10 years of receiving a grant.
- (5) The legislature intends that grants made to school districts and postsecondary institutions pursuant to subsections (3)(a) and (3)(b) are one-time startup grants that include:
- (a) a matching component provided by the school district or postsecondary institution; and
 - (b) a plan by the school district or postsecondary institution to sustain programs beyond the term of the grant.
- (6) In accordance with 5-11-210, the commissioner shall report annually to the education interim committee on the status and impacts of the grant programs described in this section.
- (7) For purposes of this section, "quality educator shortage" means a shortage identified by the board of public education pursuant to 20-4-503.

Section 2. Appropriation. (1) There is appropriated \$1 from the general fund to the commissioner of higher education for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, for the purposes of [section 1].

(2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered a part of the ongoing base for the next legislative session.

Section 3. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.

Section 4. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 4, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 4, apply to [section 1].

Section 5. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.

Section 6. Termination. [This act] terminates June 30, 2027.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 403, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2021.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2021.

HOUSE BILL NO. 403

INTRODUCED BY T. RUNNING WOLF, J. SMALL, J. FULLER, K. ABBOTT, D. HARVEY, D. HAWK, M.
MARLER, S. NOVAK, M. WEATHERWAX, R. WHITEMAN PENA, J. WINDY BOY

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