

HOUSE BILL 880

By Dixie

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 4, relative to financial aid for low-income
students.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Grow Your Own Teacher Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 7, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) There is established the Grow Your Own Teacher loan-scholarship program. The program is intended to incentivize economically disadvantaged students to become highly skilled and committed teachers in high-needs schools in the LEA from which the loan-scholarship recipient graduates from high school.

(b) The Tennessee student assistance corporation (TSAC) shall administer a program for select economically disadvantaged students, not to exceed thirty-five (35) persons per class level per year, who aspire to be teachers in high-needs schools in the LEA from which the student will graduate from high school. Participation in the program at any time shall be limited to one hundred sixteen (116) loan-scholarship recipients.

(c) TSAC shall create a competitive application process, and shall consider an applicant's grades, volunteer work, and eagerness to have a career as a teacher at a high-needs school in the LEA from which the applicant will graduate high school. TSAC may form a committee of teachers who reflect the diversity of high-needs schools to assist with the application process.

(d) Recipients of the loan-scholarship created pursuant to this section must:

(1) Graduate from a public high school in this state;

(2) Have been eligible for free or reduced price lunch for at least four (4) school years in high school; and

(3) Commit to, within six (6) years after graduation from a state institution of higher education, teach for four (4) years at a public school:

(A) Where at least fifty percent (50%) of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch; and

(B) In the LEA in which the recipient graduated from high school.

(e) Recipients of the loan-scholarship must attend a state institution of higher education with an approved teacher education program, as determined by the state board of education, or must enroll initially in a two-year college program in this state that has transfer agreements with an approved teacher education program in this state.

(f) Recipients of the loan-scholarship must pursue a baccalaureate degree program leading to licensure as a teacher.

(g) Each loan-scholarship shall be in the amount of seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) per year for up to four (4) years.

(h) Recipients who become public school teachers in a school as required by subdivision (d)(3) shall receive forgiveness of the loan-scholarship after four (4) years of teaching service at any school or schools in the LEA meeting those requirements.

TSAC may award partial loan-scholarship forgiveness based on partial fulfillment of the requirements of this section.

(i) All loan-scholarships shall be evidenced by notes made payable to TSAC, which shall bear interest at the rate of nine percent (9%) from the date of the initial scholarship award.

SECTION 3. The Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation shall promulgate rules to effectuate the purposes of this act. The rules shall be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019, the public welfare requiring it.