

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 changing Section 52 as follows:

(110 ILCS 947/52)

Sec. 52. Illinois Future Teacher Corps Program.

(a) In order to encourage academically talented Illinois students, especially minority students, to pursue teaching careers, especially in teacher shortage disciplines (which shall be defined to include early childhood education) or at hard-to-staff schools (as defined by the Commission in consultation with the State Board of Education), the Commission shall, each year, receive and consider applications for scholarship assistance under this Section. An applicant is eligible for a scholarship under this Section when the Commission finds that the applicant is:

- (1) a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen;
- (2) a resident of Illinois;
- (3) a high school graduate or a person who has received a General Educational Development Certificate;
- (4) enrolled or accepted for enrollment at or above the junior level, on at least a half-time basis, at an Illinois

institution of higher learning; and

(5) pursuing a postsecondary course of study leading to initial certification or pursuing additional course work needed to gain State Board of Education approval to teach, including alternative teacher certification.

(b) Recipients shall be selected from among applicants qualified pursuant to subsection (a) based on a combination of the following criteria as set forth by the Commission: (1) academic excellence; (2) status as a minority student as defined in Section 50; and (3) financial need. Preference may be given to previous recipients of assistance under this Section, provided they continue to maintain eligibility and maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution of higher learning at which they enroll.

In each year, to support mentoring, guidance, and in-service support for teaching candidates in order to increase the likelihood that they will complete their full teaching commitments and elect to continue teaching in targeted disciplines and hard-to-staff schools, a minimum of 200 awards shall be allocated to participants in the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program.

(c) Each scholarship awarded under this Section shall be in an amount sufficient to pay the tuition and fees and room and board costs of the Illinois institution of higher learning at which the recipient is enrolled, up to an annual maximum of \$5,000; except that in the case of a recipient who does not

reside on-campus at the institution of higher learning at which he or she is enrolled, the amount of the scholarship shall be sufficient to pay tuition and fee expenses and a commuter allowance, up to an annual maximum of \$5,000. For recipients who agree to teach in a teacher shortage discipline or at a hard-to-staff school under subsection (i) of this Section, the Commission may, by rule and subject to appropriation, increase the annual maximum amount to \$10,000. If a recipient agrees to teach in both a teacher shortage discipline and at a hard-to-staff school under subsection (i) of this Section, the Commission may increase the amount of the scholarship awarded by up to an additional \$5,000.

(d) The total amount of scholarship assistance awarded by the Commission under this Section to an individual in any given fiscal year, when added to other financial assistance awarded to that individual for that year, shall not exceed the cost of attendance at the institution of higher learning at which the student is enrolled.

(e) A recipient may receive up to 4 semesters or 6 quarters of scholarship assistance under this Section.

(f) All applications for scholarship assistance to be awarded under this Section shall be made to the Commission in a form as set forth by the Commission. The form of application and the information required to be set forth therein shall be determined by the Commission, and the Commission shall require eligible applicants to submit with their applications such

supporting documents as the Commission deems necessary.

(g) Subject to a separate appropriation made for such purposes, payment of any scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined by the Commission. There shall be a separate appropriation made for scholarships awarded to recipients who agree to teach in a teacher shortage discipline or at a hard-to-staff school under subsection (i) of this Section. The Commission may use for scholarship assistance under this Section (i) all funds appropriated for scholarships under this Section that were formerly known as ITEACH Teacher Shortage Scholarships and (ii) all funds appropriated for scholarships under Section 65.65 of this Act (repealed by this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly), formerly known as Illinois Future Teacher Corps Scholarships.

All scholarship funds distributed in accordance with this Section shall be paid to the institution on behalf of the recipients. Scholarship funds are applicable toward 2 semesters or 3 quarters of enrollment within an academic year.

(h) The Commission shall administer the scholarship program established by this Section and shall make all necessary and proper rules not inconsistent with this Section for its effective implementation.

(i) Prior to receiving scholarship assistance for any academic year, each recipient of a scholarship awarded under this Section shall be required by the Commission to sign an agreement under which the recipient pledges that, within the

one-year period following the termination of the academic program for which the recipient was awarded a scholarship, the recipient: (i) shall begin teaching for a period of not less than 5 years, (ii) shall fulfill this teaching obligation at a nonprofit Illinois public, private, or parochial preschool or an Illinois public elementary or secondary school, and (iii) shall, upon request of the Commission, provide the Commission with evidence that he or she is fulfilling or has fulfilled the terms of the teaching agreement provided for in this subsection.

(j) If a recipient of a scholarship awarded under this Section fails to fulfill the teaching obligation set forth in subsection (i) of this Section, the Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the teaching obligation not completed, plus interest at a rate of 5% and if applicable, reasonable collection fees. The Commission is authorized to establish rules relating to its collection activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section. Payments received by the Commission under this subsection (j) shall be remitted to the State Comptroller for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, except that that portion of a recipient's repayment that equals the amount in expenses that the Commission has reasonably incurred in attempting collection from that recipient shall be remitted to the State Comptroller for deposit into the Commission's Accounts Receivable Fund.

(k) A recipient of a scholarship awarded by the Commission under this Section shall not be in violation of the agreement entered into pursuant to subsection (i) if the recipient (i) enrolls on a full-time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the field of teaching at an institution of higher learning; (ii) is serving as a member of the armed services of the United States; (iii) is temporarily totally disabled, as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (iv) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment as a teacher at a school that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection (i) and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (v) is taking additional courses, on at least a half-time basis, needed to obtain certification as a teacher in Illinois; or (vi) is fulfilling teaching requirements associated with other programs administered by the Commission and cannot concurrently fulfill them under this Section in a period of time equal to the length of the teaching obligation. Any such extension of the period during which the teaching requirement must be fulfilled shall be subject to limitations of duration as established by the Commission.

(Source: P.A. 93-21, eff. 7-1-03; 94-133, eff. 7-7-05.)