



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 7168

January Session, 2025



AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Eligible student" means any person who (A) has a cumulative
3 grade point average of at least a "B+" in high school, (B) is classified as
4 an in-state student pursuant to section 10a-29 of the general statutes, (C)
5 is making satisfactory academic progress while enrolled in a teacher
6 preparation program at a public institution of higher education, (D) has
7 completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and (E) has
8 accepted all available financial aid; and

9 (2) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
10 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.
11 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
12 loans received by a qualifying student.

13 (b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall
14 establish a tuition assistance program for eligible students who enroll in
15 a teacher preparation program at a public institution of higher
16 education in the state. The department shall pay not less than the
17 balance of tuition, after the acceptance of all available financial aid, for
18 such eligible student who (1) is approved for the tuition assistance

19 program, (2) enrolls at a public institution of higher education in a
20 teacher preparation program leading to a bachelor's or master's degree
21 for the fall semester of 2026, or any semester thereafter, and (3) agrees
22 to work as a teacher in a public school in the state for not less than five
23 years after completion of such teacher preparation program.

24 (c) On or before January 1, 2026, said department shall post in a
25 conspicuous location on its Internet web site (1) a description of such
26 tuition assistance program, and (2) the application form for such
27 program. Not later than April 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
28 department shall notify students in each public high school in the state
29 about the tuition assistance program.

30 (d) For the fall semester of 2026, and each semester thereafter, the
31 Department of Education shall provide tuition assistance (1) to not more
32 than fifty eligible students each semester on a rolling basis, and (2) for
33 the first four academic years if an eligible student is enrolled in a
34 bachelor's degree program, or the first five academic years if an eligible
35 student is enrolled in an integrated bachelor's and master's degree
36 program, provided the eligible student meets and continues to meet the
37 requirements of this section. The department shall not use tuition
38 assistance to supplant any financial aid, including, but not limited to,
39 state or institutional aid, otherwise available to an eligible student.

40 (e) The Commissioner of Education shall develop tuition assistance
41 repayment criteria for recipients who do not complete the teacher
42 preparation program or five years of employment as a teacher in a
43 public school in the state. Any amounts repaid to the department shall
44 be deposited in the General Fund.

45 (f) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
46 Department of Education shall submit, in accordance with the
47 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
48 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
49 relating to education a report on the tuition assistance program,
50 including, but not limited to, (1) the number of eligible students enrolled

51 in the program, (2) the teacher preparation programs in which such
52 eligible students enrolled, and (3) for each cohort of eligible students,
53 the (A) average amount of tuition assistance provided, (B) completion
54 rates, and (C) employment placement upon graduation.

55 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established a
56 scholarship program administered by the Talent Office of the
57 Department of Education to provide an annual scholarship to a teacher
58 who is certified through an alternative route to certification. The
59 scholarship shall be available to any teacher who (1) completes an
60 alternative route to certification program, (2) is employed as a teacher
61 in the state, and (3) enrolls in a teacher preparation program at an
62 institution of higher education in the state leading to a master's degree
63 for the fall semester of 2026, or any semester thereafter. The scholarship
64 shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and in an amount
65 prescribed by the Talent Office.

66 (b) On or before January 1, 2026, said department shall post in a
67 conspicuous location on its Internet web site (1) a description of such
68 scholarship program, including, but not limited to, the amount of
69 scholarship available through such program, and (2) the application
70 form for such program.

71 (c) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
72 Department of Education shall submit, in accordance with the
73 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
74 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
75 relating to education a report on the scholarship program, including,
76 but not limited to, the number of scholarship recipients and the teacher
77 certification program in which such teacher enrolled.

78 Sec. 3. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The sum of five million dollars is
79 appropriated to the Department of Education from the General Fund,
80 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for the tuition assistance
81 program established pursuant to section 1 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section

ED *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R* APP