



State of Wisconsin  
2017 - 2018 LEGISLATURE

LRB-5386/1  
ARG:emw

## 2017 SENATE BILL 841

February 21, 2018 - Introduced by Senator VINEHOUT, cosponsored by Representatives VRUWINK, POPE, BERCEAU, SARGENT, SUBECK, ANDERSON and SPREITZER. Referred to Committee on Education.

- 1     **AN ACT to create** 20.235 (1) (fr) and 39.387 of the statutes; **relating to:** creation  
2             of a grant program for teachers employed by sparsely populated school districts  
3             and requiring the exercise of rule-making authority.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill creates a rural teacher grant program, administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board, to encourage teachers to teach in rural schools.

Under current law, HEAB administers various financial assistance programs to assist teachers. Those programs include programs under which HEAB provides loans to college students and then forgives a certain amount of those loans after the loan recipient has been employed as a teacher in a high-demand area in a rural school district or a school in the city of Milwaukee, as a teacher of visually impaired pupils or as an orientation and mobility instructor in this state, or, for a minority student, as a teacher in a high-demand area in a school in the city of Milwaukee.

This bill creates a grant program to encourage eligible teachers to teach in schools operated by eligible school districts. Under the bill, 1) an “eligible school district” is a school district whose membership in the school year preceding the school year for which a grant is awarded under the grant program divided by the school district’s area in square miles is less than ten and 2) an “eligible teacher” is a teacher who teaches in a school operated by an eligible school district.

The bill requires HEAB to grant financial assistance to an eligible teacher who is nominated by his or her school district for participation in the grant program and who submits a claim for that financial assistance after each year in which the eligible

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teacher teaches in such a school. The claim must 1) include the signature of the eligible teacher and of a representative of the school district employing the eligible teacher certifying that during the period for which financial assistance is claimed, the school district was an eligible school district and the eligible teacher taught in a school operated by that eligible school district; 2) include a commitment by the eligible teacher that he or she will use the financial assistance to repay student loans incurred to defray the cost of tuition, fees, and expenses for programs of study relating to the teaching profession; and 3) provide such other information as HEAB may require by rule to verify the claimant's eligibility for financial assistance.

The maximum amount of financial assistance that an eligible teacher may receive under the grant program is \$1,000 for the first school year, \$2,000 for the second school year, \$2,000 for the third school year, \$2,000 for the fourth school year, and \$3,000 for the fifth school year in which the eligible teacher participates in the grant program. An eligible teacher may receive financial assistance under the grant program for no more than five school years. No more than four eligible teachers employed by a given eligible school district may participate in the grant program in a given school year.

For further information see the *state* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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***The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:***

1           **SECTION 1.** 20.005 (3) (schedule) of the statutes: at the appropriate place, insert  
2 the following amounts for the purposes indicated:

**2017-18            2018-19**

3           **20.235 Higher educational aids board**

4           (1)    STUDENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

5           (fr)   Rural teacher grant program           GPR       B                   -0-               -0-

6           **SECTION 2.** 20.235 (1) (fr) of the statutes is created to read:

7           20.235 (1) (fr) *Rural teacher grant program.* Biennially, the amounts in the  
8 schedule for the rural teacher grant program under s. 39.387.

9           **SECTION 3.** 39.387 of the statutes is created to read:

10          **39.387 Rural teacher grant program. (1) DEFINITIONS.** In this section:

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1 (a) "Eligible school district" means a school district whose membership in the  
2 school year preceding the school year for which a grant is awarded to an eligible  
3 teacher under sub. (4) divided by the school district's area in square miles is less than  
4 10.

5 (b) "Eligible teacher" means a teacher who meets the eligibility requirements  
6 specified in sub. (3).

7 **(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.** There is established, to be administered by the  
8 board, a rural teacher grant program to encourage eligible teachers to teach in  
9 schools operated by eligible school districts by providing grants of financial  
10 assistance to those eligible teachers as provided in sub. (4).

11 **(3) ELIGIBILITY.** A teacher is eligible for financial assistance as provided under  
12 sub. (4) if the teacher meets all of the following requirements:

13 (a) He or she teaches in a school operated by an eligible school district.

14 (b) He or she does not appear on the statewide support lien docket under s.  
15 49.854 (2) (b), unless the teacher provides to the board a payment agreement that has  
16 been approved by the county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5) and that is  
17 consistent with rules promulgated under s. 49.858 (2) (a).

18 **(4) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.** (a) From the appropriation under s. 20.235 (1) (fr),  
19 the board shall grant financial assistance to eligible teachers who are nominated by  
20 their school districts for participation in the grant program as provided in par. (b) and  
21 who submit claims for that financial assistance as provided in par. (c). The maximum  
22 amount of financial assistance that an eligible teacher may receive under this  
23 subsection is \$1,000 for the first school year, \$2,000 for the 2nd school year, \$2,000  
24 for the 3rd school year, \$2,000 for the 4th school year, and \$3,000 for the 5th school  
25 year in which the eligible teacher participates in the grant program. An eligible

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1 teacher may receive financial assistance under this subsection for no more than 5  
2 school years. An eligible teacher who receives financial assistance under this  
3 subsection shall use that financial assistance only for the purpose of repaying  
4 student loans incurred to defray the cost of tuition, fees, and expenses for programs  
5 of study relating to the teaching profession. The board may provide financial  
6 assistance on a prorated basis to an eligible teacher who is employed less than full  
7 time.

8 (b) An eligible school district may nominate an eligible teacher for participation  
9 in the grant program by submitting that nomination to the board in a form prescribed  
10 by the board. No more than 4 eligible teachers employed by a given eligible school  
11 district may participate in the grant program in a given school year. The nomination  
12 shall include such information as the board may require to establish that the school  
13 district employing the teacher is an eligible school district and that the teacher is an  
14 eligible teacher and shall provide any other information the board may require by  
15 rule promulgated under sub. (5).

16 (c) After each year in which an eligible teacher who has been accepted for  
17 participation in the grant program teaches in a school operated by an eligible school  
18 district, the eligible teacher may submit to the board a claim for financial assistance.  
19 The claim shall include the signature of the eligible teacher and of a representative  
20 of the school district employing the eligible teacher certifying that during the period  
21 for which financial assistance is claimed, the school district was an eligible school  
22 district and the eligible teacher taught in a school operated by that eligible school  
23 district, shall include a commitment by the eligible teacher that he or she will use  
24 the financial assistance to repay student loans incurred to defray the cost of tuition,  
25 fees, and expenses for programs of study relating to the teaching profession, and

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1 shall provide such other information as the board may require by rule promulgated  
2 under sub. (5) to verify the claimant's eligibility for financial assistance.

3 (d) If the board determines that a claimant under par. (c) is eligible to receive  
4 financial assistance under this subsection, the board shall provide that assistance,  
5 subject to the amounts available in the appropriation account under s. 20.235 (1) (fr).  
6 If the amount of financial assistance claimed in a fiscal year exceeds the amounts  
7 available in that appropriation account, the board shall prorate the financial  
8 assistance paid in that fiscal year in the proportion that the amounts available bear  
9 to the total amount of financial assistance payable in that fiscal year.

10 (5) RULES. The board shall promulgate rules to implement and administer this  
11 section. Those rules shall include rules specifying the information a school district  
12 must include in a nomination for participation in the grant program under sub. (4)  
13 (b) and the information a teacher must include in a claim for financial assistance  
14 under sub. (4) (c).

15 **SECTION 4. Initial applicability.**

16 (1) RURAL TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM. This act first applies to an eligible teacher,  
17 as defined in section 39.387 (1) (b) of the statutes, as created by this act, who teaches  
18 in a school operated by an eligible school district, as defined in section 39.387 (1) (a)  
19 of the statutes, as created by this act, in the 2018-19 school year.

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(END)