

## CHAPTER 97-297

### Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 2

An act relating to postsecondary education; creating the minority teacher education scholars program; requiring a training program; providing for enrollment in the program; authorizing scholarships to certain students; providing for repayment of scholarships; providing exceptions; creating the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers, Inc., in the College of Education at the University of Florida; requiring budget projections and a 7-year plan; authorizing scholarships; providing for a board of directors; providing responsibilities; limiting administrative costs; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the number of public school students who are African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, and Native American continues to increase, while the number of public school teachers of those races is decreasing rapidly, and

WHEREAS, a Caucasian student is three times as likely to have a teacher of the same race as is an Hispanic American student or an African American student, and

WHEREAS, African American male students number more than 12 percent of the total enrollment in grades kindergarten through 12, and

WHEREAS, African American men enrolled in State University System colleges of education number less than 3 percent of the future teachers, and

WHEREAS, the total number of Hispanic Americans and African Americans who enter the teaching profession is insufficient by far to maintain their current representation level, even though they are currently underrepresented by an alarming proportion, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. There is created the minority teacher education scholars program, which is a collaborative performance-based scholarship program for African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, and Native American students. The participants in the program include Florida's public community colleges and its public and private universities that have teacher education programs.

(1) The minority teacher education scholars program shall provide an annual scholarship of \$4,000 for each approved minority teacher education scholar who is enrolled in one of Florida's public or private universities in the junior year and is admitted into a teacher education program.

(2) To assist each participating education institution in the recruitment and retention of minority teacher scholars, the administrators of the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers, Inc., shall implement a systemwide training

program. The training program must include an annual conference or series of conferences for students who are in the program or who are identified by a high school or a community college as likely candidates for the program. The training program must also include research about and dissemination concerning successful activities or programs that recruit minority students for teacher education and retain them through graduation, certification, and employment. Staff employed by the corporation may work with each participating education institution to assure that local faculty and administrators receive the benefit of all available research and resources to increase retention of their minority teacher education scholars.

(3) The total amount appropriated annually for new scholarships in the program must be divided by \$4,000 and by the number of participating colleges and universities. Each participating institution has access to the same number of scholarships and may award all of them to eligible minority students. If a college or university does not award all of its scholarships by the date set by the program administration at the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers, Inc., the remaining scholarships must be transferred to another institution that has eligible students.

(4) A student may receive a scholarship from the program for 3 consecutive years if the student remains enrolled full-time in the program and makes satisfactory progress toward a baccalaureate degree with a major in education.

(5) If a minority teacher education scholar graduates and is employed as a teacher by a Florida district school board, the scholar is not required to repay the scholarship amount so long as the scholar teaches in a Florida public school. A scholar may repay the entire scholarship amount by remaining employed as a Florida public school teacher for 1 year for each year he or she received the scholarship.

(6) If a minority teacher education scholar does not graduate within 3 years, or if the scholar graduates but does not teach in a Florida public school, the scholar must repay the total amount awarded, plus annual interest of 8 percent.

(a) Interest begins accruing the first day of the 13th month after the month in which the recipient completes an approved teacher education program or after the month in which enrollment as a full-time student is terminated. Interest does not accrue during any period of deferment or eligible teaching service.

(b) The repayment period begins the first day of the 13th month after the month in which the recipient completes an approved teacher education program or after the month in which enrollment as a full-time student is terminated.

(c) The terms and conditions of the scholarship repayment must be contained in a promissory note and a repayment schedule. The loan must be paid within 10 years after the date of graduation or termination of full-time enrollment, including any periods of deferment. A shorter repayment period may be granted. The minimum monthly repayment is \$50 or the unpaid

balance, unless otherwise approved, except that the monthly payment may not be less than the accruing interest. The recipient may prepay any part of the scholarship without penalty.

(d) The holder of the promissory note may grant a deferment of repayment for a recipient who is a full-time student, who is unable to secure a teaching position that would qualify as repayment, who becomes disabled, or who experiences other hardships. Such a deferment may be granted for a total of 24 months.

(e) If a student defaults on the scholarship, the entire unpaid balance, including interest accrued, becomes due and payable at the option of the holder of the promissory note, or when the recipient is no longer able to pay or no longer intends to pay. The recipient is responsible for paying all reasonable attorney's fees and other costs and charges necessary for administration of the collection process.

Section 2. (1) There is created the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers, Inc., which is a not-for-profit statutory corporation housed in the College of Education at the University of Florida. The corporation shall administer and manage the minority teacher education scholars program.

(2) The corporation shall submit an annual budget projection to the Department of Education to be included in the annual legislative budget request. The projection must be based on a 7-year plan that would be capable of awarding the following schedule of scholarships:

(a) In the initial year, 700 scholarships of \$4,000 each to scholars in the junior year of college.

(b) In the second year, 350 scholarships to new scholars in their junior year and 700 renewal scholarships to the rising seniors.

(c) In each succeeding year, 350 scholarships to new scholars in the junior year and renewal scholarships to the 350 rising seniors.

(3) A board of directors shall administer the corporation. The Governor shall appoint to the board at least 15 but not more than 25 members, who shall serve terms of 3 years, except that four of the initial members shall serve 1-year terms and four shall serve 2-year terms. At least four members must be employed by public community colleges and at least 11 members must be employed by public or private postsecondary institutions that operate colleges of education. At least one member must be a financial aid officer employed by a postsecondary education institution operating in Florida. The Board of Regents, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities shall collaborate to provide the Governor with a list of at least 15 recommendations of members to be appointed to the board. Administrative costs for support of the Board of Directors and the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers may not exceed 5 percent of funds allocated for the program. The board shall:

(a) Hold meetings to implement this section.

- (b) Select a chairperson annually.
- (c) Make rules for its own government.
- (d) Appoint an executive director to serve at its pleasure. The executive director shall be the chief administrative officer and agent of the board.
- (e) Maintain a record of its proceedings.
- (f) Delegate to the chairperson the responsibility for signing final orders.
- (g) Carry out the training program as required for the minority teacher education scholars program. No more than 5 percent of the funds appropriated for the minority teacher education scholars program may be expended for administration, including administration of the required training program.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

Approved by the Governor June 3, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 3, 1997.