

IN THE SENATE

SENATE BILL NO. 1290

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO THE RURAL AND UNDERSERVED EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM; AMENDING  
2 TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW CHAPTER 65, TITLE 33,  
3 IDAHO CODE, TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS REGARDING THE RURAL AND UNDERSERVED  
4 EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM, TO DEFINE TERMS, TO PROVIDE FOR CERTAIN DU-  
5 TIES REGARDING CRITICAL QUALITY EDUCATOR SHORTAGES, TO PROVIDE FOR LOAN  
6 REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE IN CERTAIN INSTANCES, AND TO PROVIDE FOR AWARD  
7 PROTOCOLS AND STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND  
8 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.  
9

10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

11 SECTION 1. That Title 33, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended  
12 by the addition thereto of a NEW CHAPTER, to be known and designated as Chap-  
13 ter 65, Title 33, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

14 CHAPTER 65

15 RURAL AND UNDERSERVED EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM

16 33-6501. RURAL AND UNDERSERVED EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM. A rural  
17 and underserved educator incentive program as set forth in this chapter  
18 shall be administered by the state board of education. The program shall  
19 provide for the direct repayment of educational loans of eligible educators  
20 or the reimbursement of eligible educational expenses such as additional  
21 degrees, advanced degrees, career technical certifications, or other ed-  
22 ucational expenses. The state board of education may promulgate rules to  
23 implement the provisions of this chapter.

24 33-6502. DEFINITIONS. As used in this chapter:

25 (1) "Educational loans" means all loans made pursuant to a federal loan  
26 program, except federal parent loans for undergraduate students (PLUS), as  
27 provided in 20 U.S.C. 1078-2.

28 (2) "Federal loan program" means educational loans authorized by 20  
29 U.S.C. 1071 et seq., 20 U.S.C. 1087a et seq., and 20 U.S.C. 1087aa et seq.

30 (3) "Rural and underserved educator" means a full-time, standard cer-  
31 tificated individual employed as an instructional or pupil service employee  
32 in an eligible Idaho school district or at an eligible public charter school.

33 33-6503. CRITICAL QUALITY EDUCATOR SHORTAGES. (1) The state board  
34 of education shall identify specific schools that are impacted by critical  
35 quality educator shortages using the following criteria:

36 (a) Rural isolation of the school pursuant to section 33-319, Idaho  
37 Code; or

1 (b) Economic disadvantage of the school based on eligibility for funds  
 2 pursuant to title I, part A of the federal elementary and secondary edu-  
 3 cation act, as amended.

4 (2) Rural and underserved educators who are employed at schools iden-  
 5 tified in subsection (1) of this section are eligible for repayment of all  
 6 or part of any such educator's outstanding educational loans existing at the  
 7 time of application in accordance with the eligibility and award criteria  
 8 established in this chapter up to the amount specified in section 33-6504,  
 9 Idaho Code, or eligible education expenses established by the state board of  
 10 education and in rules promulgated by the state board of education.

11 33-6504. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE -- EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES REIM-  
 12 BURSEMENT -- ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD CRITERIA. (1) Loan repayment assistance  
 13 or the reimbursement of eligible education expenses may be provided on be-  
 14 half of a rural and underserved educator who:

15 (a) Is employed in a school identified pursuant to section 33-6503,  
 16 Idaho Code;

17 (b) Has a signed contract with such school; and

18 (c) Has an educational loan that is not in default and that has a minimum  
 19 unpaid current balance of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or has  
 20 at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in eligible education expenses  
 21 at the time of application; or

22 (d) Has eligible education expenses that may be reimbursed pursuant to  
 23 this chapter.

24 (2) To qualify for loan repayment assistance or education expense re-  
 25 imbursement under this chapter, a rural and underserved educator shall sub-  
 26 mit an application to the state board of education. For loan repayment ap-  
 27 plications, the application must include official verification or proof of  
 28 the applicant's total unpaid accumulated educational loan debt and any other  
 29 documentation as required by the state board of education for verification  
 30 of the applicant's eligibility.

31 (3) A rural and underserved educator is eligible for loan repayment as-  
 32 sistance or eligible educational expenses for up to four (4) years, provided  
 33 that the educator remains employed at the same school or by the same school  
 34 district. The state board of education may remit payment of the loan on be-  
 35 half of the rural and underserved educator in accordance with the require-  
 36 ments of this chapter and rules promulgated by the state board of education.

37 (4) The total incentive award shall be:

38 (a) One thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) for the first year;

39 (b) Two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for the second year;

40 (c) Three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,500) for the third year;  
 41 and

42 (d) Four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500) for the fourth year.

43 33-6505. AWARD PROTOCOLS -- CONSTRUCTION. (1) The state board of edu-  
 44 cation may promulgate rules to establish protocols for determining the num-  
 45 ber of incentive awards that will be made annually based on available appro-  
 46 priations for the program.

1           (2) The state board of education shall define the criteria for de-  
2     termining the schools that are most impacted by critical quality educator  
3     shortages.

4           (3) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to require the provision of  
5     incentive awards without an appropriation for that purpose.

6           SECTION 2. An emergency existing therefor, which emergency is hereby  
7     declared to exist, this act shall be in full force and effect on and after  
8     July 1, 2022.