

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015**

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**HOUSE BILL 661**

Short Title:   Teacher Recruitment and Scholarships. (Public)

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Sponsors:   Representatives Horn, Langdon, Elmore, and Bryan (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.*

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Referred to:   Education - K-12, if favorable, Appropriations.

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April 14, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO TRANSFORM EDUCATOR PREPARATION IN THIS STATE.  
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Purpose. – The purpose of this act is to create a positive transformational force for the quality of education that students receive in North Carolina public schools by recruiting, preparing, and supporting at least 1,000 extraordinary teachers every year for the State's hardest-to-staff schools and classrooms. Based upon research demonstrating the pivotal importance of highly effective teachers in preparing every North Carolina student for success in college and careers, the General Assembly recognizes that enrollment in the State's traditional and nontraditional teacher preparation programs has declined significantly in recent years, and that local school administrative units struggle in particular schools and subject areas to recruit the top talent students need, particularly in low-wealth areas and in science, math, and special education. A crucial piece of providing an excellent educator for every student is a program dedicated to aggressive recruitment of top educator candidates, rigorous preparation, and incentives for teachers to serve in hard-to-staff schools and positions. The General Assembly firmly believes that one of the best ways to elevate educators and make the teaching profession more attractive to highly talented individuals is to significantly raise the bar on qualifications, including cognitive and noncognitive traits, required to enter educator preparation programs.

Further, the General Assembly supports the commitment by the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina to improve the quality of Schools of Education within its constituent institutions, and is committed to furthering that work by targeting the State's financial support to top-performing programs. To support these commitments, this act provides funds and guidelines to establish a recruitment and scholarship program for talented North Carolina high school students, college students, and working professionals to pursue rigorous training for service as teacher leaders in high-need positions and schools in North Carolina.

**SECTION 2.** Definitions. – For the purposes of this act, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Approved preparation program. – An educator preparation program at a community college as defined in G.S. 115D-2(2), a constituent institution as defined in G.S. 116-4, or an independent nonprofit educator preparation program that meets eligibility criteria developed by the State Education Assistance Authority (Authority), including evidence of success in preparing highly effective teachers for hard-to-staff schools and positions in North Carolina.



- 1 (2) Eligible individual. – A senior enrolled in a North Carolina high school; a  
2 second-year student enrolled in a community college as defined in  
3 G.S. 115D-2(2) or a constituent institution as defined in G.S. 116-4; or a  
4 working professional who is committed to teaching in North Carolina public  
5 schools.
- 6 (3) Hard-to-staff school. – A public school, including a charter school, in North  
7 Carolina that appears on the State Board of Education's list of "hard-to-staff"  
8 schools developed in accordance with Section 5 of this act.
- 9 (4) Hard-to-staff position. – Any grade level or subject area in North Carolina  
10 public schools that appears on the State Board of Education's list of  
11 "hard-to-staff" positions developed in accordance with Section 5 of this act.

12 **SECTION 3.** Program Authorized. – The State Education Assistance Authority  
13 (Authority) shall recruit and award scholarship loans to eligible individuals who wish to enroll  
14 in an approved preparation program for demanding preparation to teach in a hard-to-staff  
15 school or position in a North Carolina public school. The program shall provide for multiple  
16 routes to enter teaching in North Carolina, such as traditional four-year educator preparation  
17 programs, Masters of Arts in Teaching program, and alternative fast-track preparation  
18 programs with a record of success in preparing highly effective teachers. Graduates of  
19 approved preparation programs under this act shall be eligible for North Carolina teaching  
20 licenses, alternative or traditional, pursuant to G.S. 115C-296. The Authority shall focus on the  
21 following groups of individuals in recruiting participants for the program:

- 22 (1) North Carolina high school seniors who wish to enroll in a traditional  
23 educator preparation program.
- 24 (2) Students enrolled in a community college, as defined in G.S. 115D-2(2), or a  
25 constituent institution, as defined in G.S. 116-4, who are pursuing a degree  
26 in a hard-to-staff field.
- 27 (3) Working professionals with expertise in hard-to-staff subject areas in North  
28 Carolina.

29 **SECTION 4.** Eligibility Criteria. – The Authority shall establish eligibility criteria  
30 for the program as follows:

- 31 (1) For eligible individuals. – Rigorous standards for awarding scholarship loans  
32 to eligible individuals within each group described in subdivisions (1)  
33 through (3) of Section 3 of this act, including scores on relevant career- and  
34 college-readiness assessments, course Grade Point Averages (GPAs),  
35 experience, and accomplishments, as well as individual mindset, beliefs, and  
36 competencies positively correlated with future success helping all students  
37 succeed academically.
- 38 (2) For approved preparation programs. – Rigorous standards for approved  
39 preparation programs to enroll scholarship recipients, including, but not  
40 limited to, the program's rating on the UNC Teacher Quality Dashboard, the  
41 impact that graduates of each teacher preparation program have on Pre-K  
42 and K-12 student learning, measures associated with national accreditation  
43 such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP),  
44 the strength of the program's residency component, and the program's prior  
45 success in preparing highly effective teachers for hard-to-staff schools and  
46 positions.

47 **SECTION 5.** State Board of Education Identification of "Hard-to-Staff" Schools  
48 and Positions. – The State Board of Education shall on an annual basis identify "hard-to-staff  
49 schools" and "hard-to-staff positions" that shall govern eligible courses of study and placements  
50 for all scholarship recipients. In making those determinations, the State Board shall consider  
51 the following:

- 1 (1) For "hard-to-staff schools," considerations shall include, at a minimum, the  
2 school's letter grade or grades on the North Carolina School Report Card,  
3 including the percentage of students at the school scoring below grade level  
4 on State standardized assessments and the percentage of students failing to  
5 meet expected academic growth; annual rates of teacher turnover; and the  
6 percentage of teachers at the school with provisional or temporary licenses.
- 7 (2) For "hard-to-staff positions," considerations shall include, at a minimum, the  
8 number of available positions in a grade or subject relative to the number of  
9 anticipated teachers licensed in that grade or subject.

10 **SECTION 6.** Application Process and List of Approved Preparation Programs. –  
11 The Authority shall establish an application process for scholarship loans no later than  
12 December 31, 2015, and shall determine the schedule for applications and scholarship awards  
13 on at least an annual basis thereafter. The Authority shall establish an initial list of approved  
14 preparation programs no later than December 31, 2015, and shall update the list on an annual  
15 basis thereafter.

16 **SECTION 7.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of  
17 Governors of The University of North Carolina the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for  
18 the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for the 2016-2017  
19 fiscal year to allocate to the Authority to implement the provisions of this act. The Authority  
20 may supplement State funds appropriated under this act with donations from foundations,  
21 corporations, individuals, or other sources. All funds appropriated to or otherwise received by  
22 the Authority for scholarships from sources other than State funds, all funds received as  
23 repayment of scholarship loans, and all interest earned on these funds, shall be deposited in the  
24 North Carolina Education Endowment Fund established pursuant to G.S. 115C-472.16. Of the  
25 funds allocated to the Authority under this act, the Authority shall prioritize the use of funds as  
26 follows:

- 27 (1) Recruitment. – The Authority shall develop and implement a proactive,  
28 aggressive and strategic recruitment plan for talented high school students,  
29 students enrolled in institutions of higher education, and working  
30 professionals across North Carolina that includes the following:
- 31 a. Active engagement of educators, business leaders, senior human  
32 resources experts from North Carolina businesses, elected officials,  
33 and other community leaders in multiple regions of the State in the  
34 recruitment and selection process.
  - 35 b. Focus on attracting candidates who are working or pursuing a degree  
36 in a hard-to-staff field, such as science, technology, engineering and  
37 math, as well as candidates from minority backgrounds.
- 38 (2) Scholarship loans. – The Authority shall award scholarship loans in the  
39 amount of eight thousand five hundred dollars (\$8,500) per year for each  
40 year the recipient is enrolled in an approved preparation program.
- 41 (3) Administration of the program. – The Authority may use up to two hundred  
42 thousand dollars (\$200,000) each fiscal year for administration of the  
43 program.

44 **SECTION 8.** Loan Forgiveness. – The Authority shall forgive a scholarship loan  
45 if, within seven years after graduation, the recipient enters the teaching profession in a  
46 hard-to-staff school or position in North Carolina and remains in a hard-to-staff school or  
47 position for at least four years. However, the Authority shall not recall the loan if the  
48 hard-to-staff school or position no longer appears on the State Board of Education's list of  
49 "hard-to-staff" schools or "hard-to-staff" positions as provided for by Section 5 of this act after  
50 the recipient accepts that position. The Authority shall also forgive the loan if it finds that it is

1 impossible for the recipient to teach for four years, within seven years after graduation, at a  
2 North Carolina public school because of the death or permanent disability of the recipient.

3 **SECTION 9.** Reporting Requirements. – By August 1, 2016, and annually  
4 thereafter, the Authority shall submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the results of  
5 the scholarship program. In preparation of its report, the Authority shall work with scholarship  
6 recipients and eligible preparation programs as needed to enable the collection, analysis, and  
7 evaluation of at least the following relevant data, within necessary privacy constraints:

8 (1) The percentage of scholarship recipients who are placed as teachers in  
9 hard-to-staff schools and positions in the State within two years.

10 (2) The percentage of scholarship recipients who receive a rating of effective or  
11 above on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation instrument.

12 (3) Teacher turnover in general and in hard-to-staff positions and schools among  
13 scholarship recipients, by preparation program.

14 (4) Student achievement growth and proficiency in classrooms taught by  
15 scholarship recipients.

16 **SECTION 10.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2015.