

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 411

BY PENCE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO EDUCATION; AMENDING TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A
2 NEW CHAPTER 56, TITLE 33, IDAHO CODE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE QUALITY ED-
3 UCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT, TO PROVIDE RULEMAKING, TO DEFINE
4 TERMS, TO PROVIDE DUTIES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REGARDING
5 QUALITY CRITICAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGES, TO PROVIDE LOAN REPAYMENT ASSIS-
6 TANCE AND REQUIRE RELATED DOCUMENTATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDING AND
7 PRIORITIES.
8

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

10 SECTION 1. That Title 33, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended
11 by the addition thereto of a NEW CHAPTER, to be known and designated as Chap-
12 ter 56, Title 33, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

13 CHAPTER 56

14 QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT

15 33-5601. QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM -- RULEMAKING. A
16 quality educator loan assistance program as set forth in this chapter shall
17 be administered by the state board of education. The program shall provide
18 for the direct repayment of education loans of eligible quality educators.
19 The state board of education shall promulgate rules to implement the provi-
20 sions of this chapter.

21 33-5602. DEFINITIONS. As used in this chapter:

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

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

27 (3) "Quality educator" means a full-time certificated employee of a
28 public school district, including charter districts.

29 33-5603. QUALITY CRITICAL EDUCATOR SHORTAGES. (1) The state depart-
30 ment of education shall identify:

31 (a) Specific schools that are impacted by critical quality educator
32 shortages using the following criteria:

33 (i) Rural isolation of the school;

34 (ii) Economic disadvantage of the school; and

35 (iii) Low student achievement at the school; and

36 (b) Within such schools, the specific subject areas that are impacted
37 by critical quality educator shortages.

38 (2) The state department shall publish an annual report that lists the
39 schools and subject areas identified as impacted by critical quality educa-

1 tor shortages, that explains the reasons for such identifications and that
2 provides information regarding any success in retention at such schools.

3 (3) Quality educators who work at schools identified in subsection (1)
4 of this section are eligible for repayment of all or part of any such educa-
5 tor's outstanding educational loans existing at the time of application in
6 accordance with the eligibility and award criteria established in this chap-
7 ter and in rules promulgated by the state board of education.

8 33-5604. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE -- DOCUMENTATION. (1) Loan repay-
9 ment assistance may be provided on behalf of a quality educator who:

10 (a) Is employed in an identified school described in section 33-5603,
11 Idaho Code; and

12 (b) Has an educational loan that is not in default and that has a minimum
13 unpaid current balance of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) at the
14 time of application.

15 (2) In order to qualify for loan repayment assistance under this chap-
16 ter, a quality educator shall submit an application to the state board of ed-
17 ucation in accordance with rules promulgated by the state board. The appli-
18 cation shall include official verification or proof of the applicant's total
19 unpaid accumulated educational loan debt and any other documentation as re-
20 quired by the state board for verification of the applicant's eligibility.

21 (3) A quality educator is eligible for loan repayment assistance for up
22 to four (4) years. The total annual loan repayment assistance for an eli-
23 gible quality educator may not exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000). The
24 state board may require an eligible quality educator to provide documenta-
25 tion that such educator has exhausted repayment assistance from other fed-
26 eral, state or local loan forgiveness, discharge or other repayment incen-
27 tive programs.

28 (4) The state board may remit payment of the loan on behalf of the qual-
29 ity educator in accordance with the requirements of this chapter and rules
30 promulgated by the state board.

31 33-5605. FUNDING -- PRIORITIES. (1) The quality educator loan assis-
32 tance program is subject to legislative appropriation to the state board
33 of education. If the funding for the quality educator loan assistance pro-
34 gram in any year is less than the total amount for which quality educators
35 qualify, then the state board shall provide preference in the award of loan
36 repayment assistance to quality educators who work in specific schools that
37 are most impacted by quality educator shortages as identified in section
38 33-5603, Idaho Code.

39 (2) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to require the provision of
40 loan repayment assistance without an appropriation for that purpose.