

A bill for an act
relating to higher education; establishing a pilot financial aid program for
teachers of color; appropriating money.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **TEACHERS OF COLOR FINANCIAL AID PILOT PROGRAM.**

Subdivision 1. Establishment. The teachers of color financial aid pilot program is established under the supervision of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to encourage academically talented postsecondary students of color to become teachers of early childhood, elementary, or secondary education; to increase the academic achievement of diverse student populations; to help close the existing student achievement gaps by creating a cadre of qualified new teachers; and to encourage students of color attending four-year institutions to enroll in a teacher preparation program and students attending two-year colleges to transfer to and enroll in a teacher preparation program at eligible institutions. Financial aid under this pilot program is to provide incentives for postsecondary students of color to enter teacher preparation programs and to teach in Minnesota school districts.

Subd. 2. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given them:

(1) "student of color" means a student who is African American, American Indian, Alaskan native, Asian American or Pacific Islander, or Hispanic;

(2) "director" means the director of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education;

(3) "eligible institution" means a public four-year postsecondary institution with an approved teacher preparation program that is participating in a pilot partnership under subdivision 4; and

(4) "teacher preparation program" means a program at an institution that prepares students to be teachers.

Subd. 3. Grants. (a) The director shall award grants under this section to eligible students as an incentive to enter teacher preparation programs. An eligible student must submit an application for a grant under this section for the student's junior and senior years in a teacher preparation program. Applications must be submitted to the director in the form and manner and with the information required by the director.

(b) An eligible student who is enrolled as a junior or senior in a teacher preparation program at an eligible institution may receive a grant under this section of up to \$5,000 each year for a maximum of two academic years or the equivalent at an eligible institution if the student continues to make satisfactory progress toward a baccalaureate degree in education.

(c) Grants under this section are made within the limits of appropriations for the pilot program. The director may prorate the grant awards and the length of time of the award for students who attend part-time. The director must give priority for grants under this section to students who are eligible for the Pell grant or for a state grant under Minnesota Statutes, section 136A.121.

Subd. 4. Student eligibility. A student is eligible to receive a grant under this section if the student:

- (1) is an American citizen or eligible noncitizen residing in Minnesota;
- (2) certifies that the student is a student of color;
- (3) is enrolled in a four-year postsecondary institution and making satisfactory academic progress; and
- (4) is admitted to an approved teacher preparation program at an eligible institution.

Subd. 5. Pilot partnerships. Up to four partnerships between a public four-year institution in Minnesota with an approved teacher preparation program and at least one Minnesota school district may participate in the teachers of color financial aid pilot program. Of the four partnerships, one must be a partnership between Winona State University and the Rochester school district and one must be a partnership between St. Cloud State University and Robbinsdale public schools. Each partnership must agree to devise a plan to recruit students of color for teacher preparation programs and assistance under this section. Recruitment of students must include recruiting and encouraging talented students of color who attend two-year colleges to transfer to teacher preparation programs at participating pilot institutions.

Subd. 6. Teachers of color program promotion. The director may use up to \$25,000 of the appropriation for the program under this section for the administration and

H.F. No. 3885, as introduced - 2007-2008th Legislative Session (2007-2008)

3.1 promotion of the pilot program and to assist with the recruitment of students of color
3.2 for teacher preparation programs. The director must consult with the commissioner of
3.3 education, the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and
3.4 private colleges to develop strategies to recruit, retain, and mentor students in pilot
3.5 programs while the students attend a teacher preparation program. To the extent possible,
3.6 existing state or private programs must be used to provide recruitment, retention, and
3.7 mentoring services under this subdivision.

3.8 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; TEACHERS OF COLOR FINANCIAL AID PILOT**
3.9 **PROGRAM.**

3.10 Of the amount appropriated in Laws 2007, chapter 144, article 1, section 3,
3.11 subdivision 2, \$225,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for the teachers of color financial aid pilot
3.12 program under section 1.