122A.635 EDUCATOR TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The Department of Education must award competitive grants to increase the number of teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian, complete teacher preparation programs, and meet the requirements for a Tier 3 license under section 122A.183. Eligibility for a grant under this section is limited to public or private higher education institutions that offer a teacher preparation program approved by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.

Subd. 2. **Competitive grants.** (a) The commissioner must award competitive grants to a variety of higher education institution types under this section. The commissioner must require an applicant institution to submit a plan describing how it would use grant funds to increase the number of teachers who are of color or who are American Indian. To the extent practicable, the commissioner must award grants based on the following criteria:

(1) program outcomes, including graduation or program completion rates and licensure recommendation rates for candidates who are of color or who are American Indian compared to all candidates enrolled in a teacher preparation program at the institution and, for each outcome measure, the number of teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian;

(2) the extent to which an institution's plan is clear in describing how the institution would use grant funds for implementing explicit research-based practices to provide programmatic support to teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian. Plans for grant funds may include:

(i) recruiting more racially and ethnically diverse candidates for admission to teacher preparation programs;

(ii) providing differentiated advising, mentoring, or other supportive community-building activities in addition to what the institution provides to all candidates enrolled in the institution;

(iii) providing academic tutoring or support to help teacher candidates pass required assessments; and

(iv) providing for program staffing expenses;

(3) an institution's plan to provide direct financial assistance as scholarships or stipends to teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian, not to exceed $5,000 per academic year for each candidate. The purpose of direct financial assistance is to provide cost of attendance financial assistance to candidates matriculating through the licensure program if they demonstrate financial need;

(4) whether the institution has previously received a competitive grant under this section and has demonstrated positive outcomes from the use of grant funds for efforts helping teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian to enroll in and successfully complete teacher preparation programs and be recommended for licensure;

(5) geographic diversity among the applicant institutions. To the extent there are sufficient applications, and to the extent practicable, the commissioner must award an equal number of grants between applicants in greater Minnesota and those in the seven-county metropolitan area; and

(6) the percentage of racially and ethnically diverse teacher candidates enrolled in the teacher preparation program compared to the aggregate percentage of students of color and American Indian students enrolled in the institution, regardless of major.

(b) The commissioner must not penalize an applicant institution in the grant review process for using grant funds only to provide direct financial support to teacher candidates if that is the institution's priority and the institution uses other resources to provide programmatic support to candidates.

(c) The commissioner must determine award amounts for development, maintenance, or expansion of programs based only on the degree to which applicants meet the criteria in this subdivision, the number of candidates who are of color or who are American Indian supported by an applicant program, and funds available.

(d) The commissioner must allow an institution to use up to 25 percent of the awarded grant funds to provide programmatic support for the teacher candidates receiving financial support.

Subd. 3. **Grant program administration.** (a) The department must not predetermine the number of institutions to be awarded grants under this section or set a limit for the amount that any one institution may receive as part of the competitive grant application process.

(b) All grants must be awarded by August 15 of the fiscal year in which the grants are to be used. The deadline must be extended if changes to the grant program or appropriation impact the timeline for grant awards. An institution that receives a grant under this section may use the grant funds up to a four-year period to sustain support for teacher candidates at any stage from recruitment and program admission to graduation and licensure application. For grantees who receive multiple awards that overlap in the same academic years, the maximum combined total of direct financial assistance that an institution may provide to the same teacher candidate in the same academic year is $10,000.

Subd. 4. **Report.** (a) By August 15 of each year, an institution awarded a grant under this section must prepare for the commissioner a detailed report regarding the expenditure of grant funds, including the amounts used to recruit, retain, and support teacher candidates of color or American Indian teacher candidates to complete programs and be recommended for licensure. The report must include:

(1) the total number of teacher candidates of color and American Indian teacher candidates who:

(i) are enrolled in the institution;

(ii) are supported by grant funds with direct financial assistance during the academic reporting year;

(iii) are supported with other programmatic supports;

(iv) are recruited and newly admitted to a licensure program;

(v) are enrolled in a licensure program;

(vi) have completed a licensure program; and

(vii) were recommended for licensure in the field for which they were prepared;

(2) the total number of teacher candidates of color or American Indian teacher candidates at each stage from program admission to licensure recommendation as a percentage of all candidates seeking the same licensure at the institution; and

(3) a brief narrative describing the successes and challenges of efforts proposed in the grant application to support candidates with grant funds, and lessons learned for future efforts.

(b) By November 1 of each year, the commissioner must post a report on its website summarizing the activities and outcomes of grant recipients and results that promote sharing of effective practices and lessons learned among grant recipients.

Subd. 5. **Positions transferred.** All classified and unclassified positions associated with the administration of grant programs being transferred to the Department of Education under this section are transferred with their incumbents in accordance with section 15.039, subdivision 7, except as otherwise provided in section 122A.07.

History: *1Sp2019 c 11 art 3 s 15; 2020 c 83 art 1 s 25; 2023 c 55 art 5 s 55; 1Sp2025 c 10 art 3 s 6*