

STATE OF NEW YORK

334

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. CRUZ, CUNNINGHAM, SAYEGH, RAGA, DAVILA, SIMON, ZINERMAN, LEVENBERG, GONZALEZ-ROJAS, RAMOS -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 3615
2 to read as follows:

3 § 3615. Bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and
4 retention program. 1. Definitions. a. The term "school with a bilingual
5 teacher shortage" means a public school in which there was a shortage of
6 bilingual, certified teachers in the previous school year and there is a
7 projected shortage in the current school year as determined by the
8 commissioner.

9 b. The term "bilingual, certified teacher" means a teacher who holds a
10 permanent or professional state teaching certificate appropriate to the
11 teaching position, including the subject area if applicable, in which
12 such teacher is to be employed and who is fully qualified to teach in a
13 bilingual education program.

14 c. The term "school district" shall mean a common, union free,
15 central, central high school, or city school district.

16 d. The term "board of education" shall mean the governing board of any
17 public school or public school district defined in paragraph c of this
18 subdivision.

19 e. The term "year of service" shall mean ten months of continuous
20 full-time service as a teacher during a school year, generally occurring
21 between September first and June thirtieth.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 2. Application and funding. a. Grants shall be made to school
2 districts for bilingual, certified teacher recruitment and retention
3 activities necessary to increase the number of bilingual, certified
4 teachers in schools with a bilingual teacher shortage.

5 b. Such grants shall be awarded to school districts, within the limits
6 of funds appropriated therefor, through a competitive process that takes
7 into consideration the magnitude of any shortage of bilingual, certified
8 teachers in the school district, the fiscal capacity of the district,
9 and the number of new bilingual, certified teachers the school district
10 intends to hire in the coming school year. Grants provided pursuant to
11 this section shall be used only for the purposes enumerated in this
12 section.

13 c. Not more than sixty percent of the funds allocated pursuant to this
14 section shall be made available to any one school district.

15 d. Any school district receiving funds under this section shall main-
16 tain any local effort in the current year equivalent to such effort in
17 the base year for any local program related to the recruitment or
18 retention of teachers or any program that has purposes that are similar
19 to any purpose of this section or the district shall provide a local
20 match to state funds received pursuant to this section. State funds
21 provided pursuant to this section shall not supplant local funds for any
22 purpose similar to the purposes of this section.

23 e. Applications by a school district for funding pursuant to this
24 section shall be filed with the commissioner, in a form determined by
25 the commissioner, by June first of the base year and school districts
26 shall be notified of their grant award by June thirtieth of the base
27 year, provided that in any year such application and award dates may be
28 modified by the commissioner for the reasonable administration of the
29 program. Such application shall include a plan by the school district
30 for the expenditure of the funds in each category of allowable expenses
31 authorized by subdivision three of this section, and such expenditures
32 shall be consistent with such plan and the provisions of this section.

33 f. A person receiving an award pursuant to any subdivision of this
34 section shall not be eligible for an award pursuant to any other subdivi-
35 sion of this section in a school year.

36 3. Bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment incentive
37 program. Bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment incentive
38 awards may be available to teachers pursuant to the provisions of this
39 subdivision to attract teachers to employment in schools with a bilin-
40 gual teacher shortage.

41 a. Eligibility. To be eligible for an award pursuant to this subdivi-
42 sion, an applicant shall:

- 43 (1) be a bilingual, certified teacher;
44 (2) agree to a service obligation of one year of service in a school
45 with a bilingual teacher shortage as a condition of receiving an award
46 pursuant to this subdivision; and
47 (3) be employed for the first time as a bilingual, certified teacher
48 in the school district.

49 b. Application and selection. (1) The board of education shall deter-
50 mine the form of the application and the application process for teach-
51 ers deemed eligible for the award, and shall in its discretion select
52 the number of eligible applicants who will receive an award pursuant to
53 this subdivision.

54 (2) If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of awards
55 determined by the board pursuant to this subdivision, then the board

1 shall use an objective competitive process based on educational quali-
2 fications to determine which eligible applicants shall receive awards.

3 c. Payment of awards. (1) Annual awards from state and local funds
4 provided for this purpose shall be paid by the board of education to the
5 award recipient. Award recipients shall be entitled to receive awards
6 pursuant to the provisions of this subdivision and such awards shall be
7 in addition to and not part of any award recipient's base salary.

8 (2) The initial annual award shall be ten thousand dollars, and such
9 initial award may be renewable each year, for up to three additional
10 years, provided that the recipient agrees to one year of service as a
11 full-time bilingual, certified teacher in schools with a bilingual
12 teacher shortage for each year of a renewed award and has provided
13 satisfactory service in any prior year in which an initial or renewed
14 award was granted to the recipient. No awards shall be made for less
15 than one school year of service and the sum of any initial and renewed
16 awards shall not exceed forty thousand dollars.

17 Awards made pursuant to this subdivision shall be used to reimburse
18 any educational costs, including those for which student loans may have
19 been taken, incurred by the recipient prior to receipt of the award for
20 certification as a teacher in the public schools of the state.

21 (3) The board of education shall develop and secure from the award
22 recipient a written agreement outlining the service obligation. Such
23 agreement shall include provisions for the recipient to repay the amount
24 of the award to the school district if the recipient fails to complete
25 their service obligation in any year where an initial or renewed award
26 is granted, and such repaid amounts shall be deducted from any grant
27 amounts due to the district from the state pursuant to this section.
28 Upon a written appeal by an award recipient, the board of education, in
29 its discretion, may provide a waiver of repayment provisions for an
30 award recipient who fails to complete their service requirement for
31 documented reasons of health or other severe hardship, as determined by
32 the commissioner.

33 d. Notification. The board of education shall notify both successful
34 and unsuccessful applicants by September first of any school year for
35 which an initial or renewed award is provided to teachers pursuant to
36 this subdivision.

37 4. Reporting. By November first following the completion of each
38 school year, the commissioner shall report to the governor and the
39 legislature regarding the bilingual teachers of tomorrow teacher
40 recruitment and retention program. Such report shall list the amount of
41 each school district's total grant pursuant to this section, the uses of
42 the grant, and the number of awards granted by type pursuant to this
43 section, as well as an analysis of the effectiveness of the program in
44 recruiting and retaining bilingual, certified teachers in schools with a
45 bilingual teacher shortage in the state.

46 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.