§ 3004-a. National board for professional teaching standards certification grant program. 1. Notwithstanding any inconsistent provision of law, the commissioner shall establish the Albert Shanker national board for professional teaching standards certification grant program, to be used by the department to defray any costs incurred by an eligible teacher, as that term is described in subdivision two of this section and his or her sponsoring school district, where such eligible teacher seeks national board certification from the national board for professional teacher standards.

2. As used in this section, "eligible teacher" shall mean a New York state tenured public school teacher who:

(a) is currently teaching in New York state;

(b) has graduated from an accredited college or university; and

(c) holds a valid New York state teaching certificate.

3. Under the provisions of this section and subject to the filing requirement described in subdivision four of this section, a grant in an amount of up to two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500) shall be made available from the Albert Shanker national board for professional teaching standards certification grant program to each eligible teacher to defray the expenses of certification by the national board for professional teaching standards. Such sum may include the direct reimbursement by the department to the eligible teacher's sponsoring school district from the total grant award to cover the cost of hiring a substitute teacher for up to three days or the duration of such eligible teacher's approved leave, whichever is less.

4. The commissioner shall be responsible for promulgating any regulations necessary to effectuate the provisions of this section, including:

(a) establishing within the department an application form and filing deadline requirements to be utilized by eligible teachers applying for the Albert Shanker national board for professional teaching standards grant program;

(b) establishing a mechanism for processing and approving applications within the department;

(c) establishing a mechanism to allocate grant awards to approved eligible teachers; and

(d) establishing a mechanism to reimburse sponsoring school districts for up to three days of approved leave as described in subdivision three of this section.

5. An eligible teacher for whom the state pays a participation fee shall be liable for repayment of the grant to the department if such eligible teacher:

(a) does not complete the process; or

(b) completes the process, but does not teach in a New York state public school for at least one full year after achieving national board for professional teaching standards certification.

6. Repayment of the grant is not required:

(a) if the certification process is not completed or if the eligible teacher fails to teach for one full year after completion due to his or her death or disability or some other extenuating circumstances as may be recognized by the board of regents; or

(b) if the eligible teacher completes the process but does not achieve certification.