

"AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR ENHANCEMENT AND RETRAINING GRANT PROGRAM FOR GRANTING AWARDS TO EMPLOYED TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN ARKANSAS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE ADDITIONAL COLLEGE INSTRUCTION DIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT; TO DESIGNATE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Purpose. There is an existing need in the State to enhance the academic expertise of employed teachers and administrators in Arkansas by providing opportunities for them to pursue additional college instruction related to their employment.

SECTION 2. Authorization. There is hereby established a program to be known as the "Teacher and Administrator Enhancement and Retraining Grant Program" to be administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

SECTION 3. Eligibility. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education may make initial and continuing grants to students under the following conditions:

(A) Grant recipients shall be bona fide residents of the State of Arkansas, as defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and be citizens of the United States or permanent resident aliens.

(B) Grant recipients shall maintain current certification with the Arkansas Department of Education, allowing them to be employed by the public schools in Arkansas.

(C) Grant recipients shall be currently employed as teachers or administrators in Arkansas and declare an intention to continue such employment in Arkansas.

(D) Grant recipients shall be enrolled in an eligible, accredited college or university of Arkansas.

(E) Grant recipients shall be enrolled in college level courses directly related to their employment as certified by the Director of the Department of Education, General Education Division.

(F) Grant recipients shall maintain a grade point average in their college work of no less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or appropriate equivalent as determined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

(G) Students may receive grants up to but not in excess of the cost of student fees, books, and instructional supplies at the public institution of higher education in this State assessing the highest rate of student fees. The grant or grants made to one individual within one fiscal year may not exceed the aforementioned costs associated with six semester credit hours (or the equivalent of six semester credit hours).

(H) Should the number of grant requests exceed funding available, priority will be given to those teachers or administrators who did not successfully complete such tests of proficiency in basic academic skills and/or subject area content as teachers and administrators employed in the public schools may be required to take pursuant to State law or regulation of the State Board of Education.

SECTION 4. This Act shall in no way discriminate on the basis of race,

color, national origin, religion, sex or area of teacher education.

SECTION 5. Administration. This program shall be administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education which shall have the authority to establish necessary rules, regulations, procedures, and selection criteria for the administration of the program and to designate necessary forms and schedules. The Department may utilize an appropriate advisory committee to assist it in its responsibilities in this program.

SECTION 6. All loan awards made under the Teacher and Administrator Enhancement and Retraining Loan Program as provided in Act 109 of the First Extraordinary Session of 1983, as amended, are hereby recognized as grants and all outstanding loan obligations under that legislation are terminated.

SECTION 7. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed. Acts 166 and 230 of 1985 and Act 109 of the 1983 First Extraordinary Session are specifically repealed.

SECTION 8. Emergency. It is hereby found and determined that this program is necessary to improve the quality of instruction in the public schools in Arkansas. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall be in full force and effect from and after the date of its passage and approval.

APPROVED: 3/19/87

---