

1 State of Arkansas  
2 91st General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2017  
4

*As Engrossed: S2/7/17*

## A Bill

SENATE BILL 26

5 By: Senator A. Clark  
6 *By: Representative Gates*  
7

### For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO INCREASE TEACHERS IN HIGH NEEDS SUBJECT  
10 AREAS; TO PROVIDE ENHANCED ARKANSAS ACADEMIC  
11 CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TEACHERS WHO AGREE TO  
12 TEACH IN THE HIGH NEEDS SUBJECT AREAS; AND FOR OTHER  
13 PURPOSES.  
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### Subtitle

16 TO INCREASE TEACHERS IN HIGH NEEDS  
17 SUBJECT AREAS; AND TO PROVIDE ENHANCED  
18 ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIPS  
19 FOR TEACHERS WHO AGREE TO TEACH IN THE  
20 HIGH NEEDS SUBJECT AREAS.  
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 85, Subchapter 2, is amended  
27 to add an additional section to read as follows:

28 6-85-222. Enhanced scholarships.

29 (a)(1) A recipient of an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship under  
30 this subchapter who meets the requirements under subsection (b) of this  
31 section is eligible for an enhanced scholarship award of:

32 (A) Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for the academic year  
33 in which the recipient either:

34 (i) Has earned at least fifty-seven (57) semester  
35 credit hours but less than eighty-seven (87) semester credit hours; or

36 (ii) Is classified as a junior by the approved



1 institution of higher education in which the recipient is enrolled; and

2 (B) Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for the academic year  
3 in which the recipient either:

4 (i) Has earned at least eighty-seven (87) semester  
5 credit hours but no more than one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours  
6 unless the recipient is enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program that  
7 requires more than one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours; or

8 (ii) Is classified as a senior by the approved  
9 institution of higher education in which the recipient is enrolled.

10 (2) A recipient is eligible to receive a maximum aggregate  
11 enhanced scholarship award of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) under  
12 subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

13 (b) To be eligible for an enhanced scholarship award under subdivision  
14 (a)(1) of this section, a recipient shall:

15 (1) Maintain a postsecondary grade point average of 3.0 or  
16 higher on a 4.0 scale at an approved institution of higher education;

17 (2) Be enrolled in a teacher education program at a four-year  
18 approved institution of higher education; and

19 (3)(A) Enter into a written agreement with the Department of  
20 Higher Education to teach at a public school for a minimum of five (5)  
21 consecutive years in a high-needs subject area as determined under  
22 subdivision (b)(3)(B) of this section.

23 (B) A recipient shall be deemed to be teaching in a high-  
24 needs subject area if the subject area in which the recipient is employed to  
25 teach was determined by the Department of Education to be a high-needs  
26 subject area in:

27 (i) The year the recipient entered into the  
28 agreement with the Department of Higher Education under subdivision  
29 (b)(3)(A);

30 (ii) Any year the recipient received an enhanced  
31 scholarship award under this section; or

32 (iii) The year the recipient is licensed as a  
33 teacher by the State Board of Education.

34 (c) The written agreement entered into by the recipient and the  
35 Department of Higher Education under subdivision (b)(3) of this section shall  
36 provide that the recipient:

1           (1) Shall seek licensure as a teacher from the State Board of  
2 Education within one (1) year of completing the teacher education program and  
3 earning a degree; and

4           (2) Shall repay the enhanced scholarship award amount:

5           (A) On a pro rata basis at an interest rate and on a  
6 schedule as determined by the Department of Higher Education for each year  
7 *the recipient does not teach at a public school in a high-needs subject area*  
8 *if the recipient does not teach at a public school in a high-needs subject*  
9 *area as determined by the Department of Education for five (5) consecutive*  
10 *years after first becoming employed as a licensed teacher; or*

11           (B) In its entirety at an interest rate and on a schedule  
12 as determined by the Department of Higher Education if the recipient does  
13 not:

14           (i) Obtain licensure as a teacher from the State  
15 Board of Education within one (1) year of completing the teacher education  
16 program and earning a degree;

17           (ii) Begin work at a public school as a licensed  
18 teacher in a high-needs subject area, as determined by the Department of  
19 Education, in the academic year immediately following becoming licensed; or

20           (iii) Teach at a public school in a high-needs  
21 subject area as determined by the Department of Education in the recipient's  
22 first year as a licensed teacher.

23           (d)(1) The Department of Higher Education may defer the requirements  
24 under subdivisions (c)(2)(B)(ii) and (iii) if the Department of Higher  
25 Education, in consultation with the Department of Education, determines that  
26 *there was no employment position available at a public school that would*  
27 *reasonably enable the recipient to meet the requirements.*

28           (2) After the period of deferral, the recipient shall begin or  
29 resume teaching at a public school in a high-needs subject area or become  
30 subject to repayment under subdivision (c)(2) of this section.

31           (e)(1) By March 1 of each year, the Department of Education shall  
32 provide to the Department of Higher Education a maximum on the number of  
33 enhanced scholarships that should be awarded under this section for the  
34 following academic year based on the projected needs of licensed teachers at  
35 public schools in high-needs subject areas.

36           (2) The Department of Higher Education shall not award for an

1 academic year more enhanced scholarships than the maximum number provided by  
2 the Department of Education under subdivision (e)(1) of this section.

3 (f) If the Department of Higher Education receives applications from  
4 more qualified applicants than the number of enhanced scholarships available  
5 or if funds are not available to award enhanced scholarships to all qualified  
6 applicants, the Department of Higher Education shall award the enhanced  
7 scholarships on a competitive basis as determined by the Department of Higher  
8 Education.

9 (g) If a recipient of an enhanced scholarship under this section  
10 withdraws from an approved institution of higher education so that under the  
11 rules of that approved institution of higher education the recipient is  
12 entitled to a refund of any tuition, fees, or other charges, the approved  
13 institution of higher education shall pay the refund to which the recipient  
14 may be entitled to the Department of Higher Education to the extent of any  
15 amount the Department of Higher Education has paid to the recipient for that  
16 academic year.

17 (h) The Department of Higher Education shall promulgate rules to  
18 implement this section.

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20 /s/A. Clark  
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