HOUSE BILL NO. 499

INTRODUCED BY T. CROWE, S. NOVAK, B. EDWARDS, S. FYANT, J. WEBER, D. BEDEY, L. JONES, T. RUNNING WOLF, F. SMITH, R. TEMPEL, M. FOX, G. LAMMERS, L. SMITH, J. WINDY BOY, E. BOLDMAN, J. COHENOUR, D. HAWK, D. HAYMAN, C. KEOGH, E. KERR-CARPENTER, S. MORIGEAU, M. ROMANO, E. STAFMAN, M. THANE, P. TUSS, C. FITZPATRICK, J. LYNCH

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: “AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING THE GROW YOUR OWN GRANT PROGRAM; PROVIDING THAT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANTS UNDER THE PROGRAM; REVISING THE REQUIREMENT FOR EARNING POSTSECONDARY CREDITS WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL; REMOVING THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO CONVERT A GRANT TO A LOAN IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; EXTENDING THE TERMINATION DATE FOR THE GROW YOUR OWN GRANT PROGRAM; PROVIDING A DEFINITION; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 20-4-601, MCA; AMENDING SECTION 6, CHAPTER 514, LAWS OF 2021; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 20-4-601, MCA, is amended to read:

"**20-4-601. (Temporary) Grow your own grant program -- administration.** (1) There is a grow your own grant program administered by the commissioner of higher education. The purpose of the grant program is to develop teacher pipelines aimed at serving rural and reservation school districts.

(2) (a) The grow your own grant program must involve:

(i) the opportunity for students to take dual credit courses in education while in high school;

(ii) the opportunity for students to engage in work-based learning opportunities in the field of education; and

(iii) collaboration between school districts and institutions of higher education in developing a career pathway for education.

(b) The grant program must allow and encourage small and proximate districts to collaborate in developing their grow your own grant programs.

(c) A school district is eligible for the program if the district has one or more schools impacted by a quality educator shortage.

(d) ~~A school district that is~~ A postsecondary institution is eligible for a grant under this section ~~may be awarded a grant for up to 2 years to develop a grow your own grant program~~.

(3) Contingent on appropriation by the legislature, the commissioner shall create and administer:

(a) a grant program for ~~eligible school districts~~ eligible postsecondary institutions, in partnership with at least one eligible school district, to develop or expand a grow your own grant program that encourages students to pursue a career in teaching; and

~~(b) a grant program for tribal colleges, community colleges, and 2-year campuses to:~~

~~(i) pursue accreditation for teacher preparation programs in the specific licensure or endorsement areas that are most impacted by quality educator shortages; or~~

~~(ii) develop collaborative programs with 4-year institutions with accredited teacher preparation programs in the specific licensure or endorsement areas that are most impacted by quality educator shortages, with an emphasis on collaborative programs that can be conducted in a manner that does not require residency at the 4-year institution; and~~

~~(c)~~(b) a grow your own grant scholarship program that provides a last-dollar grant of up to $5,000 a year, not to exceed the cost of attendance, and not to exceed $10,000 total for any student, to students who:

(i) have participated or are participating in a grow your own grant program, as described in subsection (3)(a)~~, while in high school and have earned at least 6 postsecondary credits toward an education degree or are living in a community with a school impacted by a quality educator shortage~~;

(ii) are currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program in a licensure or endorsement area identified as most impacted by quality educator shortages; ~~and~~

(iii) commit to teaching in a school impacted by a quality educator shortage; and

(iv) if participation in a grow your own grant program occurred solely during high school, earned at least 6 postsecondary credits toward an education degree.

~~(4) The commissioner shall convert a grant under subsection (3)(c) to a loan if the recipient of the grant:~~

~~(i) is not licensed in a licensure or endorsement area identified as most impacted by quality educator shortages within 5 years of receiving a grant; or~~

~~(ii) does not teach for 3 or more years in a school impacted by a quality educator shortage and in a licensure or endorsement area identified as most impacted by quality educator shortages within 10 years of receiving a grant.~~

~~(5)~~(4) The legislature intends that grants made to ~~school districts and~~ postsecondary institutions pursuant to ~~subsections (3)(a) and (3)(b)~~ subsection (3)(a) are one-time startup grants that include:

(a) a matching component provided by ~~the~~ either a participating school district or the postsecondary institution; and

(b) a plan by the school district or postsecondary institution to sustain programs beyond the term of the grant.

~~(6)~~(5) In accordance with 5-11-210, the commissioner shall report annually to the education interim committee on the status and impacts of the grant programs described in this section.

~~(7)~~(6) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Postsecondary institution" means a unit of the Montana university system or a tribal college or community college located in the state.

(b) "~~quality~~ Quality educator shortage" means a shortage identified by the board of public education pursuant to 20-4-503. (Terminates June 30, ~~2027--sec. 6, Ch. 514, L. 2021~~ 2029.)"

Section 2. Section 6, Chapter 514, Laws of 2021, is amended to read:

"**Section 6. Termination.** [This act] terminates June 30, ~~2027~~ 2029."

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Appropriation.** (1) There is appropriated $500,000 from the general fund to the commissioner of higher education for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for the purposes of [section 1].

(2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered part of the ongoing base for the next legislative session.

NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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