

AMENDMENTS TO LB1284

Introduced by Education.

1 1. Strike the original sections and insert the following new
2 sections:

3 Section 1. Sections 1 to 7 of this act shall be known and may be
4 cited as the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act.

5 Sec. 2. For purposes of the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act:

6 (1) Commission means the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary
7 Education;

8 (2) Direct support professional means any individual who is employed
9 in this state and provides direct care support or any other form of
10 treatment, services, or care for individuals with intellectual and
11 developmental disabilities;

12 (3) Eligible institution means a not-for-profit college or
13 university which (a) is located in Nebraska, (b) is accredited by an
14 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of
15 Education as determined to be acceptable by the State Board of Education,
16 and (c) has a teacher education program and special education program;

17 (4) Eligible student means an individual who meets the requirements
18 for a scholarship under the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act pursuant to
19 subsection (1) of section 3 of this act or a loan pursuant to subsection
20 (2) of section 3 of this act;

21 (5) Loan recipient means an eligible student receiving a loan under
22 the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act; and

23 (6) Scholarship recipient means an eligible student receiving a
24 scholarship under the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act.

25 Sec. 3. (1) An individual is eligible for a scholarship under the
26 Special Educators of Tomorrow Act if such individual:

27 (a) At the time of application, has at least two years of experience

1 as a direct support professional; and

2 (b) Is enrolled or plans to enroll at an eligible institution to
3 pursue a teaching career in special education.

4 (2) An individual is eligible for a loan under the Special Educators
5 of Tomorrow Act if such individual:

6 (a) At the time of application, has at least two years of experience
7 as a direct support professional;

8 (b) Agrees to complete a special education program at an eligible
9 institution and has declared a special education major; and

10 (c) Commits to teach in an accredited or approved public or private
11 school in Nebraska upon (i) successful completion of the special
12 education program and (ii) becoming certified pursuant to section 79-806
13 to 79-815.

14 Sec. 4. (1) Beginning in the 2024-25 school year through the
15 2029-30 school year, an eligible student that meets the requirements of
16 subsection (1) of section 3 of this act may apply to the commission on
17 forms and in a manner prescribed by the commission on an annual basis for
18 not to exceed two years for a scholarship of up to two thousand five
19 hundred dollars per school year for educational expenses. A scholarship
20 recipient shall be in good academic standing with the recipient's
21 eligible institution to be eligible to reapply for a scholarship.
22 Scholarships shall be funded pursuant to section 6 of this act.

23 (2) Beginning in the 2024-25 school year through the 2029-30 school
24 year, an eligible student that meets the requirements of subsection (2)
25 of section 3 of this act may apply to the commission on forms and in a
26 manner prescribed by the commission on an annual basis for a loan in an
27 amount not to exceed four thousand dollars per school year. Loans awarded
28 to individual students shall not exceed a cumulative period exceeding
29 three consecutive years. Loans shall be funded pursuant to section 6 of
30 this act.

31 Sec. 5. (1) Prior to receiving any money from a loan pursuant to

1 the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act, an eligible student shall enter
2 into a contract with the commission. Such contract shall be exempt from
3 the requirements of sections 73-501 to 73-510.

4 (2) The contract shall require that if (a) the loan recipient is not
5 employed as a full-time teacher teaching in an approved or accredited
6 school in Nebraska and teaching at least a portion of the time in special
7 education for a time period equal to the number of years required for
8 loan forgiveness pursuant to subsection (3) of this section or (b) the
9 loan recipient does not complete the requirements for graduation within
10 three consecutive years after receiving the initial loan under the
11 program, then the loan shall be repaid with interest at the rate fixed
12 pursuant to section 45-103 accruing as of the date the loan recipient
13 signed the contract and actual collection costs as determined by the
14 commission. If a loan recipient fails to remain enrolled at an eligible
15 institution or otherwise fails to continue to be an eligible student,
16 repayment of the loan shall commence within six months after such change
17 in eligibility. The commission may by rule and regulation provide for
18 exceptions to the conditions of repayment pursuant to this subsection
19 based upon mitigating circumstances.

20 (3)(a) If the loan recipient (i) successfully completes the special
21 education program for which the loan recipient is receiving a forgivable
22 loan pursuant to the act and becomes certified pursuant to sections
23 79-806 to 79-815 with an endorsement in special education, (ii) becomes
24 employed as a full-time teacher teaching at least a portion of the time
25 in special education in an approved or accredited school in this state
26 within six months after becoming certified, and (iii) otherwise meets the
27 requirements of the contract, payments shall be suspended for the number
28 of years that the borrower is required to remain employed as a teacher in
29 this state under the contract.

30 (b) Beginning after the first two years of teaching full-time in
31 Nebraska following graduation with the degree for which the loan was

1 received, for each year that the loan recipient teaches full-time in
2 Nebraska pursuant to the contract, the loan shall be forgiven in an
3 amount equal to four thousand dollars.

4 Sec. 6. (1) The Special Educators of Tomorrow Cash Fund is created.
5 The fund shall consist of transfers by the Legislature and loan
6 repayments, penalties, and interest payments received in the course of
7 administering the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act. The fund shall be
8 used to fund scholarships and loans to students pursuant to the Special
9 Educators of Tomorrow Act. Any money in the Special Educators of Tomorrow
10 Cash Fund available for investment shall be invested by the state
11 investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the
12 Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

13 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature to transfer one million five
14 hundred thousand dollars from the General Fund to the Special Educators
15 of Tomorrow Fund for fiscal year 2024-25 and two hundred fifty thousand
16 dollars for each fiscal year thereafter.

17 Sec. 7. (1) The commission may adopt and promulgate rules and
18 regulations to carry out the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act.

19 (2) The Division of Developmental Disabilities of the Department of
20 Health and Human Services shall provide information to direct support
21 professionals relating to scholarships and loans available pursuant to
22 the Special Educators of Tomorrow Act.

23 Sec. 8. Sections 8 to 12 of this act shall be known and may be
24 cited as the Special Education Teacher Forgivable Loan Program Act.

25 Sec. 9. (1) The Legislature finds that Nebraska elementary and
26 secondary schools have had difficulty filling open and necessary job
27 positions, including special education teachers.

28 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature to assist individuals
29 studying to become special education teachers by supporting forgivable
30 loans to those individuals who commit to teaching in Nebraska following
31 their certification as a teacher with a special education endorsement.

1 Sec. 10. For purposes of the Special Education Teacher Forgivable
2 Loan Program Act:

3 (1) Department means the State Department of Education;

4 (2) Eligible institution means a not-for-profit college or
5 university that (a) is located in Nebraska, (b) is accredited by an
6 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of
7 Education and determined to be acceptable by the State Board of
8 Education, and (c) has a special education teacher education program;

9 (3) Eligible noncitizen means an individual who:

10 (a) Is a United States national, including a native of American
11 Samoa or Swains Island;

12 (b) Is a lawful permanent resident with a Form I-551, I-151, or
13 I-551C issued by the United States Government;

14 (c) Is a conditional permanent resident of the United States;

15 (d) Has an Arrival-Departure Record I-94 from the United States
16 Citizenship and Immigration Services showing a status of Refugee, Asylum
17 Granted, Parolee, Conditional Entrant, or Cuban-Haitian Entrant;

18 (e) Holds a T nonimmigrant status visa or is a child of an
19 individual who holds a T-1 nonimmigrant status visa;

20 (f) Is a battered immigrant-qualified alien who is a victim of abuse
21 by such individual's spouse or parent who is a citizen or permanent
22 resident;

23 (g) Is a battered immigrant-qualified alien who is a child of a
24 person designated as such under the federal Violence Against Women Act;
25 or

26 (h) Is a citizen of the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the
27 Marshall Islands, or the Federated States of Micronesia;

28 (4) Eligible student means an individual who:

29 (a) Is a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen;

30 (b) Is a high school graduate or the equivalent of a high school
31 graduate;

1 (c) Is enrolled in good standing at a state college in Nebraska or
2 the University of Nebraska;

3 (d) Is seeking initial certification as a teacher with an
4 endorsement in special education; and

5 (e) Has applied for federal financial aid grants and state
6 scholarships and grants to cover tuition and fees; and

7 (5) Teacher education program means a program of study that results
8 in obtaining a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or special education
9 endorsement that meets the education requirements for certification
10 pursuant to sections 79-806 to 79-816.

11 Sec. 11. (1) The Special Education Teacher Forgivable Loan Program
12 is created and shall be administered by the department.

13 (2) The department may award a forgivable loan to an eligible
14 student to pay for instate tuition, or the equivalent of instate tuition
15 at any eligible institution.

16 (3) The department may award up to twenty-five forgivable loans each
17 academic year for each eligible institution.

18 (4) An eligible student who is awarded a forgivable loan under the
19 Special Education Teacher Forgivable Loan Program shall enter a contract
20 with the department prior to the department dispersing any money for such
21 loan. Such contract shall contain at least the following terms:

22 (a) The eligible student shall only be eligible to receive a loan
23 under the program for the first five years that the eligible student is
24 enrolled in a teacher education program;

25 (b) The loan shall only be used to pay for any remaining tuition
26 remaining due to the eligible institution attended by the eligible
27 student after applying all awarded federal and state financial aid grants
28 and scholarships;

29 (c) The eligible student shall begin teaching special education at a
30 Nebraska elementary or secondary school within one year after graduating
31 with a degree in education; and

1 (d) The eligible student shall teach special education at a Nebraska
2 elementary or secondary school for:

3 (i) Five consecutive years after graduating with a degree in
4 education; or

5 (ii) The equivalent number of years of loans taken.

6 (5)(a) When an eligible student who was awarded any forgivable loan
7 under this section graduates from an eligible institution, the department
8 shall determine the total dollar amount of forgivable loans paid to such
9 eligible student.

10 (b) For each year after graduating from an eligible institution that
11 an eligible student complies with the terms of the contract under this
12 section, the department shall forgive twenty percent of the total dollar
13 amount of forgivable loans paid to such eligible student.

14 (c) After the fifth consecutive year of compliance with the terms of
15 the contract, the department shall notify the eligible student that the
16 total amount of forgivable loans provided under this section that were
17 owed by such eligible student are forgiven.

18 (6) If an eligible student who accepted a forgivable loan under this
19 section fails to comply with the terms of the contract described in this
20 section, such eligible student may receive a deferment from the
21 obligation of repayment as specified in rules and regulations adopted and
22 promulgated under the act.

23 (7) Any eligible student who accepted a forgivable loan under this
24 section who fails to comply with the terms of the contract described in
25 this section and who does not receive a deferment from the obligation of
26 repayment as described in this section shall repay the remaining balance
27 of any forgivable loan with simple interest at a rate of five percent per
28 year. Any repayment under this section shall be remitted to the State
29 Treasurer for credit to the General Fund.

30 (8) The department shall provide each eligible student who accepts a
31 forgivable loan under this section with a description of the obligations

1 of such eligible student under the terms of the contract described in
2 this section.

3 Sec. 12. The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate
4 rules and regulations relating to the Special Education Teacher
5 Forgivable Loan Program Act.

6 Sec. 13. (1) Beginning in school year 2025-26 and subject to
7 available appropriations, the State Department of Education shall develop
8 a pilot program to make menstrual products, including both pads and
9 tampons, available to each school district. Priority shall be given to
10 each school district:

11 (a) That classifies as a needs improvement school under the
12 accountability system developed by the State Board of Education pursuant
13 to section 79-760.06; or

14 (b) In which forty percent of the students are poverty students as
15 defined in section 79-1003.

16 (2) For school year 2025-26, a school district that receives free
17 menstrual products pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall
18 ensure that free menstrual products, including both pads and tampons, are
19 available for use in school bathrooms.

20 (3) A school board or board of education may adopt a policy relating
21 to the requirements of this section.

22 (4) The State Department of Education shall submit a report
23 electronically to the Clerk of the Legislature and the Chairperson of the
24 Education Committee of the Legislature relating to the pilot program for
25 free menstrual products pursuant to this section on or before December 1,
26 2026.

27 (5) It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate an amount not
28 to exceed two hundred fifty thousand dollars from the General Fund for
29 fiscal year 2024-25 to the State Department of Education to carry out
30 this section.

31 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate rules and

1 regulations to carry out this section.

2 Sec. 14. (1) For purposes of this section:

3 (a) Department means the State Department of Education; and

4 (b) Eligible applicant means a privately owned business based in
5 Nebraska that is in the process of researching artificial-intelligence-
6 based writing assistance that can be used to assist individuals with
7 dyslexia.

8 (2) The Dyslexia Research Grant Program is created and shall be
9 administered by the department.

10 (3)(a) An eligible applicant may apply to the department for a grant
11 under the Dyslexia Research Grant Program. The department shall prescribe
12 the application form that is to be completed when applying for a grant
13 under the Dyslexia Research Grant Program.

14 (b) Except as provided in subdivision (c) of this subsection, the
15 department may award a grant to any eligible applicant.

16 (c) The total amount of all grants awarded under the Dyslexia
17 Research Grant Program shall not be more than one million dollars.

18 (4) All grant money received under the Dyslexia Research Grant
19 Program shall be used only for the purpose of researching the use of
20 artificial-intelligence-based writing assistance by individuals with
21 dyslexia. Such research shall be focused on using aggregate writing
22 analytics to identify writing errors and patterns that can be used by
23 teachers to develop a comprehensive literacy plan for students with
24 dyslexia.

25 (5)(a) If any grant money received under the Dyslexia Research Grant
26 Program is used in violation of subsection (4) of this section, the
27 department shall notify the Attorney General of such violation.

28 (b) The Attorney General shall bring a civil action in any court of
29 competent jurisdiction to recoup any money spent in violation of
30 subsection (4) of this section. Any money collected in such civil action
31 shall be remitted to the State Treasurer for credit to the General Fund.

1 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate rules and
2 regulations to carry out this section.

3 Sec. 15. Section 38-3113, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
4 amended to read:

5 38-3113 Nothing in the Psychology Practice Act shall be construed to
6 prevent:

7 (1) The teaching of psychology, the conduct of psychological
8 research, or the provision of psychological services or consultation to
9 organizations or institutions if such teaching, research, or service does
10 not involve the delivery or supervision of direct psychological services
11 to individuals or groups of individuals who are themselves, rather than a
12 third party, the intended beneficiaries of such services, without regard
13 to the source or extent of payment for services rendered. Nothing in the
14 act shall prevent the provision of expert testimony by psychologists who
15 are otherwise exempted by the act. Persons holding a doctoral degree in
16 psychology from an institution of higher education may use the title
17 psychologist in conjunction with the activities permitted by this
18 subdivision;

19 (2) Members of other recognized professions that are licensed,
20 certified, or regulated under the laws of this state from rendering
21 services consistent with their professional training and code of ethics
22 and within the scope of practice as set out in the statutes regulating
23 their professional practice if they do not represent themselves to be
24 psychologists;

25 (3) Duly recognized members of the clergy from functioning in their
26 ministerial capacity if they do not represent themselves to be
27 psychologists or their services as psychological;

28 (4) Persons who are certified as school psychologists by the State
29 Board of Education from using the title school psychologist and
30 practicing psychology as defined in the Psychology Practice Act if (a)
31 such practice is restricted to regular employment within a setting under

1 the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education. Such individuals shall
2 be employees of the educational setting and not independent contractors
3 providing psychological services to educational settings, or (b)
4 employed through a service agency with special education programs and
5 rates approved by the State Department of Education; or

6 (5) Any of the following persons from engaging in activities defined
7 as the practice of psychology if they do not represent themselves by the
8 title psychologist, if they do not use terms other than psychological
9 trainee, psychological intern, psychological resident, or psychological
10 assistant to refer to themselves, and if they perform their activities
11 under the supervision and responsibility of a psychologist in accordance
12 with the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated under the
13 Psychology Practice Act:

14 (a) A matriculated graduate student in psychology whose activities
15 constitute a part of the course of study for a graduate degree in
16 psychology at an institution of higher education;

17 (b) An individual pursuing postdoctoral training or experience in
18 psychology, including persons seeking to fulfill the requirements for
19 licensure under the act; or

20 (c) An individual with a master's degree in clinical, counseling, or
21 educational psychology or an educational specialist degree in school
22 psychology who administers and scores and may develop interpretations of
23 psychological testing under the supervision of a psychologist. Such
24 individuals shall be deemed to be conducting their duties as an extension
25 of the legal and professional authority of the supervising psychologist
26 and shall not independently provide interpretive information or treatment
27 recommendations to clients or other health care professionals prior to
28 obtaining appropriate supervision. The department, with the
29 recommendation of the board, may adopt and promulgate rules and
30 regulations governing the conduct and supervision of persons referred to
31 in this subdivision, including the number of such persons that may be

1 supervised by a licensed psychologist. Persons who have carried out the
2 duties described in this subdivision as part of their employment in
3 institutions accredited by the Department of Health and Human Services,
4 the State Department of Education, or the Department of Correctional
5 Services for a period of two years prior to September 1, 1994, may use
6 the title psychologist associate in the context of their employment in
7 such settings. Use of the title shall be restricted to duties described
8 in this subdivision, and the title shall be used in its entirety. Partial
9 or abbreviated use of the title and use of the title beyond what is
10 specifically authorized in this subdivision shall constitute the
11 unlicensed practice of psychology.

12 Sec. 16. Section 79-8,114, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is
13 amended to read:

14 79-8,114 (1) A teacher may apply to the department for a grant. The
15 department shall not prioritize a grant based upon the school where the
16 applicant teaches.

17 (2) A teacher is eligible to apply for:

18 (a) A retention one grant of two thousand five hundred dollars if
19 the teacher has signed a contract to complete such teacher's second
20 complete school year of full-time employment as a teacher at a Nebraska
21 school in school year 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26, or 2026-27;

22 (b) A retention two grant of two thousand five hundred dollars if
23 the teacher has signed a contract to complete such teacher's fourth
24 complete school year of full-time employment as a teacher at a Nebraska
25 school in school year 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26, or 2026-27;

26 (c) A retention three grant of two thousand five hundred dollars if
27 the teacher has signed a contract to complete such teacher's sixth
28 complete school year of full-time employment as a teacher at a Nebraska
29 school in school year 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26, or 2026-27; and

30 (d)(i) A high-need retention grant of five thousand dollars if on or
31 after June 2, 2023, a teacher:

1 (A) Obtains an endorsement in special education, mathematics,
2 science, technology, or dual credit; and

3 (B)(I) For an application submitted prior to the operative date of
4 this section, signs ~~(B)~~ Signs a contract to complete a school year of
5 full-time employment as a teacher at a Nebraska school in school year
6 2024-25, 2025-26, or 2026-27; or -

7 (II) For an application submitted on or after the operative date of
8 this section, signs a contract to complete a school year of full-time
9 employment as a teacher to teach in such endorsement area at a Nebraska
10 school in school year 2024-25, 2025-26, or 2026-27.

11 (ii) A teacher shall only be eligible to receive one high-need
12 retention grant.

13 Sec. 17. Section 79-8,146, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
14 2022, is amended to read:

15 79-8,146 Sections 79-8,146 to 79-8,153 and section 21 of this act
16 shall be known and may be cited as the Teach in Nebraska Today Act.

17 Sec. 18. Section 79-8,147, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
18 2022, is amended to read:

19 79-8,147 For purposes of the Teach in Nebraska Today Act:

20 (1) Default has the same meaning as in 20 U.S.C. 1085, as such
21 section existed on January 1, 2022;

22 (2) Department means the State Department of Education;

23 (3) Grant means a grant for beginning or continuing service as a
24 classroom teacher under the Teach in Nebraska Today Act;

25 (4) ~~(3)~~ Program means the Teach in Nebraska Today Program created in
26 section 79-8,148; and

27 (5) ~~(4)~~ Teaching full-time means (a) teaching an average of at least
28 four hours per contract day performing instructional duties as a full-
29 time employee of an approved or accredited public, private,
30 denominational, or parochial school in this state or (b) teaching an
31 average of at least four hours per contract day performing dual-credit

1 instructional duties for students of approved or accredited public,
2 private, denominational, or parochial schools in this state while
3 employed full-time at an accredited public or private nonprofit college
4 or university in this state.

5 Sec. 19. Section 79-8,148, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
6 2022, is amended to read:

7 79-8,148 The Teach in Nebraska Today Program is created. The
8 department shall administer the program. The purpose of the program is to
9 attract individuals to the teaching profession who have expressed an
10 interest in teaching and to support the employment of those individuals
11 as classroom teachers by providing student loan repayment assistance or
12 grants for service as a classroom teacher in this state.

13 Sec. 20. Section 79-8,149, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
14 2022, is amended to read:

15 79-8,149 (1) Prior to the operative date of this section, student
16 ~~Student~~ loan repayment assistance under the program shall be available to
17 an individual who applies for the assistance and who:

18 (a) Is a resident of the State of Nebraska; and

19 (b) Is teaching full-time or has a contract to teach full-time at
20 the time of application for the program.

21 (2) The amount of repayment assistance awarded to an eligible
22 applicant pursuant to this section shall be limited to five thousand
23 dollars per year. An eligible applicant may be awarded repayment
24 assistance for applications approved prior to the operative date of this
25 section ~~for up to five years. The five years of awards are not required~~
26 ~~to be consecutive but shall not extend beyond eight years in total.~~

27 (3) If the funds available for repayment assistance in any year are
28 insufficient to provide assistance to all eligible applicants described
29 in subsection (1) of this section, the department shall establish
30 priorities for awarding repayment assistance with renewal applications
31 given priority over initial applications. For initial applications,

1 priority shall be given to applicants who demonstrate financial need.

2 (4) An eligible applicant may receive repayment assistance under the
3 program for the repayment of a student loan received through any lender
4 which was incurred in the applicant's own name for his or her own
5 educational expenses at any accredited public or private nonprofit
6 college or university in this state or any other state. If the loan is
7 not a state or federal guaranteed student loan, the note or other writing
8 governing the terms of the loan must require the loan proceeds to be used
9 for expenses incurred by the applicant to attend an accredited public or
10 private nonprofit college or university in this state or any other state.

11 (5) No additional applications for repayment assistance shall be
12 approved after the operative date of this section.

13 Sec. 21. (1) Beginning on the operative date of this section, a
14 grant under the program shall be available to an individual who applies
15 for the grant and who:

16 (a) Is a resident of the State of Nebraska;

17 (b) Is teaching full-time or has a contract to teach full-time at
18 the time of the application for the program;

19 (c) Has taught in Nebraska five years or less at the time of the
20 application or renewal; and

21 (d) Has an individual income that is less than fifty-five thousand
22 dollars per year; and

23 (2) The amount of a grant awarded to an eligible applicant pursuant
24 to this section shall be limited to five thousand dollars per year. An
25 eligible applicant may be awarded a grant for up to five years.

26 (3) If the funds available for grants in any year are insufficient
27 to provide grants to all eligible applicants described in subsection (1)
28 of this section, the department shall establish priorities to award
29 grants with renewal applications given priority over initial
30 applications. For initial applications, priority shall be given to
31 applicants who demonstrate financial need.

1 Sec. 22. Section 79-8,150, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2 2022, is amended to read:

3 79-8,150 (1) Applications for student loan repayment assistance
4 must be submitted no later than June 10, 2023,~~and no later than June 10~~
5 ~~of each year thereafter~~, on a form developed by the department. The
6 department shall determine whether to approve or deny each application
7 and shall notify each applicant of such determination no later than
8 September 10, 2023,~~and no later than September 10 of each year~~
9 ~~thereafter~~. Repayment assistance awarded under the program shall be paid,
10 in whole or in part as provided in section 79-8,151, no later than
11 November 10, 2023, and no later than November 10 of each year thereafter
12 for an application approved prior to the operative date of this section.
13 No new applications for loan repayment assistance shall be approved after
14 the effective date of this act.

15 (2) Applications for a grant must be submitted no later than July
16 10, 2024, and no later than July 10 each year thereafter, on a form and
17 in a manner prescribed by the department. The department shall determine
18 whether to approve or deny each application and shall notify each
19 applicant of such determination no later than October 10, 2024, and no
20 later than October 10 of each year thereafter. Grants awarded under the
21 program shall be paid directly to the applicant no later than December
22 10, 2024, and no later than December 10 of each year thereafter.

23 Sec. 23. Section 79-8,151, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
24 2022, is amended to read:

25 79-8,151 (1) For applications approved prior to the operative date
26 of this section, student ~~Student~~ loan repayment assistance awarded under
27 the program may be applied to the principal amount of the loan and to
28 interest that accrues. The repayment assistance shall be paid in one of
29 the following three ways as directed by the applicant on his or her
30 application:

31 (a) Directly to the lender or loan servicer that holds the

1 outstanding balance of the student loan in one lump-sum payment;

2 (b) Directly to the lender or loan servicer that holds the
3 outstanding balance of the student loan in monthly payments. Such monthly
4 payments shall be made:

5 (i) In twelve equal payments; or

6 (ii) If requested by the applicant, in smaller amounts over a longer
7 period of time, not to exceed twenty-four months. In such case, payments
8 shall be equal for the first twelve months or until such time as the
9 applicant's payment amount is recalculated by the lender or loan servicer
10 and then, if adjusted, shall be equal for the next twelve-month period.
11 Any unpaid funds at the end of twenty-four months may be requested to be
12 paid in a lump-sum payment to the lender or loan servicer or shall be
13 considered forfeited by the applicant. Applicants who are awarded
14 repayment assistance in more than one year may have their awards divided
15 across no more than one hundred twenty monthly payments under the
16 program; or

17 (c) Directly to the applicant for the purpose of making the
18 applicant's student loan payments. This subdivision shall only be
19 available if the applicant is not in default on any student loan at the
20 time of application. Any individual receiving repayment assistance under
21 this subdivision must provide documentation that the full award was used
22 for student loan payments when (i) applying for repayment assistance
23 under the program in subsequent years and (ii) claiming an adjustment to
24 federal adjusted gross income pursuant to section 77-2716. Such
25 documentation shall be provided using a form prescribed by the
26 department.

27 (2) The department may contract with a third-party vendor to
28 administer the repayment assistance provided pursuant to the program.

29 Sec. 24. Section 79-8,152, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
30 2022, is amended to read:

31 79-8,152 The total amount of student loan repayment assistance

1 awarded pursuant to the program shall not exceed five million dollars ~~in~~
2 ~~any fiscal year.~~ The total amount of grants awarded pursuant to the
3 program shall not exceed ten million dollars in any fiscal year.

4 Sec. 25. Section 79-2607, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
5 2022, is amended to read:

6 79-2607 (1) For purposes of this section:

7 (a) Evidence-based reading instruction means instruction in reading
8 that is in alignment with scientifically based reading research and does
9 not include the three-cueing system model of reading instruction; and

10 (b) Three-cueing system model of reading instruction is an approach
11 to foundational skills instruction that involves the use of three
12 different types of instructional cues which include semantic, syntactic,
13 and grapho-phonetic.

14 (2)(a) The State Department of Education shall develop and implement
15 a professional learning system to help provide sustained professional
16 learning and training regarding evidence-based reading instruction for
17 teachers who teach children from four years of age through third grade at
18 an approved or accredited school and teachers employed by an early
19 childhood education program approved by the State Board of Education. The
20 professional learning system shall include information and tips for
21 teachers related to helping children and families work with local family
22 literacy centers to strengthen home and family literacy programs and
23 better instruct children in reading.

24 (b) Approved or accredited elementary schools and early childhood
25 education programs approved by the State Board of Education shall ensure
26 that teachers who teach children from four years of age through third
27 grade are aware of the professional learning system and are adequately
28 trained regarding evidence-based reading instruction to effectively
29 instruct students in reading.

30 (3) The State Department of Education shall work with educational
31 service units to provide regional coaches to approved or accredited

1 elementary schools to provide assistance and job-embedded training
2 relating to evidence-based reading instruction to teachers who teach
3 students in kindergarten through third grade.

4 (4) On or before September 30 of each year, the Commissioner of
5 Education shall file a report electronically with the Clerk of the
6 Legislature relating to the status and use of the professional learning
7 system implemented pursuant to this section.

8 (5) It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate ten million
9 dollars from the General Fund for FY2024-25 and five million dollars each
10 fiscal year thereafter to the State Department of Education to provide
11 regional coaches and job-embedded training relating to evidence-based
12 reading instruction pursuant to subsection (2) or (3) of this section.

13 (6) ~~(1)~~ The State Department of Education may provide technical
14 assistance as needed to assist school boards in carrying out the Nebraska
15 Reading Improvement Act.

16 (7) ~~(2)~~ The department may adopt and promulgate rules and
17 regulations to carry out the act.

18 Sec. 26. Section 79-3301, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
19 2022, is amended to read:

20 79-3301 Sections 79-3301 to 79-3305 and sections 27 and 28 of this
21 act shall be known and may be cited as the Computer Science and
22 Technology Education Act.

23 Sec. 27. (1) The State Department of Education shall establish a
24 statewide computer science education expansion program to recruit, train,
25 and support teachers in computer science and technology education. Such
26 program shall include:

27 (a) Training for teachers seeking supplemental computer science
28 certification;

29 (b) Training designed to support the integration of computer science
30 and technology education into the instructional programs of elementary,
31 middle, and high schools; and

1 (c) Support for schools and teachers in the development of computer
2 science instructional plans that are consistent with the academic content
3 standards for computer science and technology education adopted by the
4 State Board of Education.

5 (2) The State Department of Education shall employ or contract with
6 computer science specialists to develop and deliver computer science
7 educator training. Such training shall be provided in a manner that every
8 teacher in this state has reasonable access to the training.

9 (3) The State Department of Education shall annually submit a report
10 electronically to the Governor and the Clerk of the Legislature relating
11 to the statewide computer science education expansion program. Such
12 report shall include:

13 (a) The number of training opportunities held and the format of such
14 training;

15 (b) The number of teachers who received training;

16 (c) To the extent such information is available, the number of
17 teachers that became certified or received an endorsement in computer
18 science and technology education or began teaching a class in computer
19 science and technology education within three calendar months following
20 completion of training provided pursuant to this section; and

21 (d) The costs associated with such training for the fiscal year
22 covered by the report.

23 (4) The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate rules and
24 regulations to carry out this section.

25 Sec. 28. (1) The Computer Science and Technology Education Fund is
26 created. The fund shall be administered by the State Department of
27 Education and consist of money transferred by the Legislature, federal
28 funds, gifts, grants, bequests, or other contributions or donations from
29 public or private entities that have been accepted by the State Board of
30 Education. The fund shall be used to provide computer science and
31 technology training and support pursuant to section 27 of this act. Any

1 money in the fund available for investment shall be invested by the state
2 investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the
3 Nebraska State Funds Investment Act. Any interest earned by the fund
4 shall accrue to the fund.

5 (2)(a) It is the intent of the Legislature to transfer one million
6 five hundred thousand dollars from the General Fund for fiscal year
7 2024-25 and for fiscal year 2025-26 to the Computer Science and
8 Technology Education Fund to provide computer science and technology
9 education training and support pursuant to section 27 of this act.

10 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to transfer an additional
11 five hundred thousand dollars for fiscal year 2024-25 and each fiscal
12 year thereafter from the General Fund to the Computer Science and
13 Technology Education Fund contingent upon the receipt of matching private
14 funds of such amount. The State Department of Education shall provide
15 written notification to the State Treasurer relating to the receipt of
16 private funds that would trigger a state match.

17 Sec. 29. Section 85-3004, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
18 2022, is amended to read:

19 85-3004 (1)(a) The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska
20 shall award a Nebraska Career Scholarship to any eligible university
21 student who is enrolled in an eligible program of study in an amount not
22 to exceed:

23 (i) Ten thousand dollars per year for any scholarship recipient who
24 is a transfer student; or

25 (ii) Except as provided in subdivision (1)(a)(i) of this section:

26 (A) Twenty-five thousand dollars per year for any scholarship
27 recipient who achieved a composite score on a standard college admission
28 test equivalent to a score of at least twenty-eight out of a maximum
29 score of thirty-six; or

30 (B) Ten thousand dollars per year for any scholarship recipient who
31 achieved a composite score on a standard college admission test

1 equivalent to a score of at least twenty and less than twenty-eight out
2 of a maximum score of thirty-six.

3 (b) The Board of Regents shall allocate funds appropriated to the
4 board under the Nebraska Career Scholarship Act between the university
5 campuses, determine the eligibility of students enrolled in the
6 university, receive and process applications for awards to individual
7 students, and disperse funds directly to scholarship recipients during
8 the fiscal year. Eligibility criteria shall include (i) being a first-
9 time freshman who achieved a composite score on a standard college
10 admission test equivalent to a score of at least twenty out of a maximum
11 score of thirty-six or a transfer student and (ii) enrollment in an
12 eligible program of study.

13 (c) For purposes of this section, an eligible program of study
14 means:

15 (i) Through academic year 2023-24, a program of study offered by the
16 University of Nebraska in mathematics, engineering, health care, and
17 computer information systems; ~~and~~

18 (ii) Beginning with academic year 2024-25, a program of study
19 designated by the Department of Economic Development, in collaboration
20 with the Board of Regents, based on periodic reviews of workforce needs
21 in the state; and -

22 (iii) Beginning with academic year 2024-25, a program of study in
23 special education.

24 (2) Each scholarship recipient shall register with the appropriate
25 campus office to obtain a Nebraska-based internship, apprenticeship,
26 clinical position, or employment in a major-related field prior to
27 completion of the student's eligible program of study.

28 (3) A Nebraska Career Scholarship may be used by a scholarship
29 recipient for tuition, fees, required tools and equipment, and room and
30 board.

31 (4) Each scholarship awarded under this section shall be

1 automatically renewed on an annual basis if the student remains enrolled
2 in good standing in the eligible program of study for which such
3 scholarship was awarded, except that no student shall receive a
4 scholarship renewal after four years of participation in such eligible
5 program of study.

6 (5) The Board of Regents shall collect information on each
7 university scholarship recipient and shall report electronically to the
8 Clerk of the Legislature and the Governor on or before December 1 of each
9 year the following information for each eligible program of study at the
10 university in the current or prior academic year:

11 (a) The total number of students enrolled in the program in the
12 immediately prior academic year and the total number of students enrolled
13 in the program as of September 30 for the current academic year;

14 (b) The total number of scholarship recipients in the program as of
15 September 30 for the current academic year and the total number of such
16 scholarship recipients who are newly enrolled in the program for such
17 academic year;

18 (c) The total number of students retained in the program from the
19 immediately prior academic year to the current academic year and a
20 comparison of the retention rates between scholarship recipients and
21 nonscholarship students;

22 (d) The number of students participating in an internship, an
23 apprenticeship, a clinical position, or employment in a major-related
24 field during the immediately prior academic year and a comparison of
25 participation rates for scholarship recipients and nonscholarship
26 students;

27 (e) The total number of graduates for the immediately prior academic
28 year, the number of scholarship recipient graduates for such academic
29 year, and a comparison of the graduation rates for scholarship recipients
30 and nonscholarship students; and

31 (f) The number of graduates from the immediately prior academic year

1 who obtained employment in a major-related field in the state within four
2 months after graduation and the average starting salary for such
3 graduates.

4 Sec. 30. Section 85-3103, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is
5 amended to read:

6 85-3103 The Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program is created.
7 For purposes of the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program:

8 (1) Commission means the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary
9 Education;

10 (2) Eligible institution means a not-for-profit college or
11 university which (a) is located in Nebraska, (b) is accredited by an
12 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of
13 Education as determined to be acceptable by the State Board of Education,
14 (c) has a teacher education program, and (d) if a privately funded
15 college or university, has not opted out of the program pursuant to rules
16 and regulations;

17 (3) Eligible student means an individual who (a) is a full-time
18 student, (b) is enrolled in an eligible institution in an undergraduate
19 or a graduate teacher education program working toward his or her initial
20 certificate to teach in Nebraska, (c) if enrolled at a state-funded
21 eligible institution, is a resident student as described in section
22 85-502 or, if enrolled in a privately funded eligible institution, would
23 be deemed a resident student if enrolled in a state-funded eligible
24 institution, and (d) is a student majoring in a shortage area;

25 (4) Full-time student means, in the aggregate, the equivalent of a
26 student who in a twelve-month period is enrolled in twenty-four semester
27 credit hours for undergraduate students or eighteen semester credit hours
28 for graduate students of classroom, laboratory, clinical, practicum, or
29 independent study course work;

30 (5) Majoring in a shortage area means pursuing a degree which will
31 allow an individual to be properly endorsed to teach in a shortage area;

1 (6) Shortage area means a secular field of teaching for which there
2 is a shortage, as determined by the State Department of Education, of
3 properly endorsed teachers at the time the borrower first receives funds
4 pursuant to the program;~~and~~

5 (7) Student-teaching semester means a semester of full-time
6 enrollment for clinical practice which provides initial preparation for a
7 student enrolled in an eligible institution and pursuing a certificate to
8 teach that includes a culminating supervised experience to demonstrate
9 competence in the professional teaching role for which such student is
10 applying; and

11 (8) {7} Teacher education program means a program of study approved
12 by the State Board of Education pursuant to subdivision (5)(g) of section
13 79-318.

14 Sec. 31. Section 85-3105, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is
15 amended to read:

16 85-3105 (1) The commission shall administer the Attracting
17 Excellence to Teaching Program either directly or by contracting with
18 public or private entities.

19 (2) To be eligible for the program, an eligible student shall:

20 (a) Graduate in the top quarter of his or her high school class or
21 have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a four-point
22 scale in an eligible institution;

23 (b) Agree to complete a teacher education program at an eligible
24 institution and to complete the major on which the applicant's
25 eligibility is based; and

26 (c) Commit to teach in an accredited or approved public or private
27 school in Nebraska upon (i) successful completion of the teacher
28 education program for which the applicant is applying to the Attracting
29 Excellence to Teaching Program and (ii) becoming certified pursuant to
30 sections 79-806 to 79-815.

31 (3) An eligible student ~~Eligible students~~ may apply on an annual

1 basis for a loan loans in an amount of not more than three thousand
2 dollars per year, except that an eligible student who is enrolling for a
3 student-teaching semester may apply for an additional loan of up to three
4 thousand dollars for the student-teaching semester and receive up to a
5 total of six thousand dollars for the year. Loans awarded to individual
6 students shall not exceed a cumulative period exceeding five consecutive
7 years. Loans shall only be awarded through an eligible institution. Loans
8 shall be funded pursuant to section 85-3112.

9 Sec. 32. Section 85-3112, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is
10 amended to read:

11 85-3112 (1) The Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund is created. The
12 fund shall consist of transfers by the Legislature, transfers pursuant to
13 section 79-3501, and loan repayments, penalties, and interest payments
14 received in the course of administering the Attracting Excellence to
15 Teaching Program and the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program.

16 (2)(a) For all fiscal years beginning on and after July 1, 2024, the
17 commission shall allocate on an annual basis up to two hundred fifty
18 thousand dollars of the funds transferred pursuant to section 79-3501 for
19 grants to teachers pursuant to the Career-Readiness and Dual-Credit
20 Education Grant Program.

21 (b) For all fiscal years beginning on and after July 1, 2024, the
22 commission shall allocate on an annual basis up to five hundred thousand
23 dollars of the funds transferred pursuant to section 79-3501 exclusively
24 for loans to any eligible student who is enrolling in a student-teaching
25 semester during the award year pursuant to the Attracting Excellence to
26 Teaching Program. The funds shall be distributed to all eligible
27 institutions according to the distribution formula as determined by rule
28 and regulation. The eligible institutions shall act as agents of the
29 commission in the distribution of the funds to any eligible student for a
30 student-teaching semester ~~for grants and loans to students enrolled in a~~
31 ~~teacher education program for student-teaching semesters.~~

1 (c) Of the funds remaining in the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund
2 after the distributions pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (b) of this
3 subsection, for all fiscal years, the commission shall allocate on an
4 annual basis up to four hundred thousand dollars in the aggregate of the
5 funds to be distributed for the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program
6 to all eligible institutions according to the distribution formula as
7 determined by rule and regulation. The eligible institutions shall act as
8 agents of the commission in the distribution of the funds for the
9 Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program to eligible students. The
10 commission shall allocate on an annual basis up to eight hundred thousand
11 dollars of the remaining available funds to be distributed to eligible
12 students for the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program. Funding
13 amounts granted in excess of one million two hundred thousand dollars
14 shall be evenly divided for distribution between the two programs.

15 (3) Any money in the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund available for
16 investment shall be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to
17 the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds
18 Investment Act.

19 Sec. 33. Sections 30, 31, 32, and 34 of this act become operative on
20 July 1, 2024. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,
21 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 35 of this act become operative three calendar
22 months after the adjournment of this legislative session. The other
23 sections of this act become operative on their effective date.

24 Sec. 34. Original sections 85-3103, 85-3105, and 85-3112, Revised
25 Statutes Supplement, 2023, are repealed.

26 Sec. 35. Original section 38-3113, Reissue Revised Statutes of
27 Nebraska, and sections 79-2607, 79-3301, and 85-3004, Revised Statutes
28 Cumulative Supplement, 2022, are repealed.

29 Sec. 36. Original sections 79-8,146, 79-8,147, 79-8,148, 79-8,149,
30 79-8,150, 79-8,151, and 79-8,152, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
31 2022, and section 79-8,114, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, are

1 repealed.

2 Sec. 37. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when

3 passed and approved according to law.