

TITLE 3: HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION 1: EDUCATION

§ 1601. Post Secondary Teacher Education Program Scholarship.

(a) There is hereby established a Post Secondary Teacher Education Program for the purpose of awarding undergraduate college scholarships to not more than ten students a year who are pursuing a degree in education at an accredited college or university in the Commonwealth or the United States or its territories to pay for costs directly related to the student's educational needs, including but not limited to tuition, textbooks and school supplies, transportation, and housing.

(b) The amount allocated for each scholarship shall be up to \$8,000 per annum for students attending the Northern Marianas College and up to \$15,000 per annum for students attending a four-year college or university in the United States or its territories for a period of up to four years.

(c) *Criteria and Requirements.* To be eligible for this scholarship program an individual shall:

(1) Be a United States citizen.

(2) Be a CNMI resident for at least three consecutive years prior to enrollment in a college or university.

(3) Furnish a letter of acceptance from a U.S. accredited college or university.

(4) Agree to return to the CNMI after graduation from college and work as a teacher in the Public School System for a period of two years for each year of scholarship assistance, or if fails or refuses to complete this obligation, agree to remit all the scholarship funds received through this scholarship program back to the CNMI government.

(5) Agree to reimburse the CNMI of all moneys received if the student chooses to switch course of studies to a major other than teaching.

(6) Sign a fully executed Post Secondary Teacher Education Program Scholarship Agreement, or successor agreement.

(d) As a condition of continuing scholarship assistance, a scholarship recipient shall do the following:

(1) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale a semester.

(2) Enroll in no less than fifteen credit hours a semester and be a full time student in an accredited teacher education program at a college or university.

(3) Submit a certified copy of their grades for each semester to the CNMI Scholarship Office and a class schedule for the next semester.

Source: PL 10-58, § 2; section heading, first sentence, and subsections (c), (d), (g), and (h) amended by PL 11-34, § 3; repealed and reenacted by PL 15-109, § 2, modified.

Commission Comment: PL 10-58 took effect May 15, 1997. According to PL 10-58, § 1:

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Section 1. Findings. The Legislature finds that there is a need to create a scholarship program to encourage more CNMI scholars to become teachers to serve our rapidly growing student population and to decrease the costly dependence on recruiting teachers from outside the CNMI. Those costs include recruitment, expatriation, repatriation, and housing. Considering that eighty to ninety teachers must be obtained yearly from the United States and from abroad in that manner, the Legislature finds that is necessary to more actively encourage our own students to enter the profession of education and to return and teach in the CNMI. The Legislature feels that this need could be met, in whole, or part, by the establishment of a scholarship program which builds upon the successes of the Public School System Teacher Academy Program.

PL 11-34, that amended the section heading, first sentence, and subsections (c), (d), (g), and (h) of this section, took effect on September 4, 1998. Section 1 of PL 11-34 set forth findings as follows:

Section 1. Findings. In order to create a healthier educational environment for both teacher and students, the Legislature finds that there exists a need to develop and ultimately hire more local teachers for the public school system.

The Commission deleted figures in this section that repeated written words pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(e).

Public Law 15-109 was enacted on November 9, 2007. PL 15-109 contained the following in addition to other enactments and severability and savings provisions.

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that the Post Secondary Teacher Education Program Scholarship (PSTEPS) was enacted with the passage of Public Law 10-58, as amended by Public Law 11-34, on May 15, 1997. The scholarship program was established to encourage more CNMI students to become teachers and serve the CNMI's rapidly growing student population, thereby decreasing the costly practice of recruiting teachers from outside of the CNMI. The PSTEPS was instrumental in helping over 50 students to become teachers; however, the program expired on September 30, 2004.

The Legislature further finds that the Public School System (PSS) continues to lack certified teachers to fill its classrooms and that there continues to be a need to encourage CNMI students to become teachers. Approximately 80 teachers resigned from their posts in the last school year leaving PSS with the daunting task of replacing these teachers. Recently, teachers have been recruited from off-island, which means that PSS will incur additional costs of recruitment and repatriation. The Legislature finds that the Commonwealth must continue to build upon the capacity of local resident teachers in order to meet the demands of a growing student population. It would be more prudent to invest funds used for teacher re-

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cruitment and repatriation expenses in the education of CNMI students who wish to become teachers by providing scholarships.

The Legislature finds that the Commonwealth also lacks medical doctors to fill essential positions at the Department of Public Health (DPH). The DPH expends an exorbitant amount of money each year on recruitment, housing, and repatriation fees of medical doctors and their families, in addition to the hundred thousand plus salaries of all such doctors. Again, it would be more sensible to invest these funds in educating CNMI students in the field of medicine by providing scholarships. The CNMI needs more local resident doctors to fill the medical doctor positions at the DPH.

Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to (1) re-establish the Post Secondary Teacher Education Program Scholarship to help meet the continued demand for teachers in the Commonwealth, (2) establish the Medical School Professional Scholarship, (3) require the submission of an annual report of the administration of the scholarship programs to the Governor, the presiding officers of the Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and the Secretary of the Department of Public Health, and (4) provide a sunset provision for the PSTEPS, the Medical School Professional Scholarship, and the CNMI Honor Scholarship Program.