

SESSION OF 2006

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BRIEF
HOUSE BILL NO. 2578**

As Agreed to March 31, 2006

Brief*

HB 2578 would create a special education teacher service scholarship program to be administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. The bill would limit the number of scholarships to 50 a year and allow \$3,000 to be given to qualified students each semester or its equivalent for a one-year course of study. If a student is not enrolled on a full-time basis, a student may take up to five years to complete the requisite one-year course of study and receive a proportionate amount of the \$3,000. Acceptance of the scholarship would require the recipient to teach special education for children with disabilities, on a full-time basis for at least three years, or an equivalent length of time on a part-time basis. Scholarships would be awarded based on scholastic ability, and preference would be given to students who are licensed teachers and are employed by or under contract with a school district.

If the employment requirement is not met, the recipient of the scholarship would be required to repay the full scholarship amount received plus interest at a specified rate. The bill does provide some exceptions or delays to the repayment provisions. The bill would sunset on June 30, 2011.

The bill also would establish the Teacher Education Scholarship Program within the Board of Regents. The program would award scholarships to individuals who have been employed for at least four years at an accredited school and who are:

- Licensed teachers enrolled in a program leading to a Master's degree; or
- Persons with an Associate's degree enrolled in a program leading to a Bachelor's degree.

*Conference committee report briefs are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. No summary is prepared when the report is an agreement to disagree. The conference committee summary report may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

Under the program, qualified students would receive up to 100 percent of tuition and fees for a teacher education program if that student is enrolled at a state university or an amount equal to 100 percent of the average tuition and fees at the state universities if the student is enrolled at a Kansas institution other than one of the state universities.

The bill would require a service obligation of the recipient. The student must complete the course of study; teach on a full-time basis in Kansas for one year for each 15 credit hours of assistance received or part-time for an equivalent amount of time; and begin teaching within six months of licensure. If the service obligation is not met, the student must repay the amount received plus interest. The bill also would create two funds to handle nonattendance and repayment monies.

Conference Committee Action

The Conference Committee deleted the provision that teaching for three years in a gifted student classroom would qualify for the special education teacher service scholarship program.

Background

Representative Pat Colloton, representatives of Emporia State University, The University of Kansas, and the Kansas Board of Regents appeared as proponents of the bill.

The House Committee amended the bill by increasing the scholarship from \$2,500 to \$3,000 and from two years to three years of service after testimony from proponents about the cost of tuition to achieve the special education licensure and full endorsement status.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to allow recipients of the scholarship to fulfill the service obligation by teaching gifted students.

The Senate Committee of the Whole amended the bill to insert the provisions of SB 566 which would have established the Teacher Education Scholarship Program.

The fiscal note, written on the original bill, indicates that the first year, 50 new scholarships would require \$250,000. The note

anticipates that a number of students would enroll on a part-time basis, if they currently are teaching and plan to continue to do so while studying. As a result, there would likely be both full-time and part-time recipients of the scholarship at any one time. The Board of Regents estimates that, at full implementation in the second year, the program would require \$300,000 per year. The additional ongoing cost would be borne by the State General Fund. Any fiscal effect resulting from enactment of HB 2578 would be in addition to amounts recommended in *The FY 2007 Governor's Budget Report*.