

Senate Bill 83 (as passed by the Senate)  
Sponsor: Senator Stephanie Chang  
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 4-15-25

### **RATIONALE**

Prospective Michigan teachers must complete an approved preparation program that includes a semester of supervised teaching (student teaching) to earn their teaching certification. Student teaching positions may be paid or unpaid, but student teaching without pay may create financial difficulties. Accordingly, the MI Future Educator Student Teacher Stipend Program was created, which provides up to \$9,600 per semester for full-time, unpaid student teachers who meet certain eligibility requirements. For example, a student teacher is only eligible for the stipend if that student teacher is placed in a school district. As a result, student teachers placed in preschools unaffiliated with school districts, such as Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) preschools or campus early childhood centers (preschools affiliated with public universities), are ineligible for the stipend. It has been suggested that the Stipend Program's eligibility be expanded to include preschool student teachers.

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the State School Aid Act to allow a student teacher completing a student teaching requirement at a qualifying publicly funded preschool program to receive payment under the MI Future Educator Student Teacher Stipend Program.**

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025, the State budget allocates \$30.0 million from the State School Aid Fund and \$20.0 million from the Educator Fellowship Public Provider Fund to the MI Future Educator Student Teacher Stipend Program. These funds must be paid to eligible educator preparation programs (EPPs) for payments to eligible student teachers working in a district. The bill would extend program eligibility to student teachers working in qualifying publicly funded preschool programs in the State.

The following provisions, which currently apply to student teachers working for school districts and to EPPs, also would apply to student teachers working for qualifying publicly funded preschool programs and to qualifying publicly funded preschool programs.

To receive a stipend, a student teacher must be 1) admitted to an eligible EPP; 2) working toward a teacher certification; 3) participating in required student teaching coursework; and 4) maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Student teaching coursework must include regular placement in a district where the student gains real-world, first-hand experience working in a classroom, teaching students, engaging in the day-to-day activities of a certified teacher, and working daily under the guidance of a certified teacher.

A student teacher also must complete an application in a form and manner prescribed by the Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP). The application must include the district in which the individual is working and include certification by the district and the individual's eligible EPP that the student is working as a student teacher. If an individual is employed by a district as a teacher of record, the individual is not eligible for payment.

If the individual's eligible EPP is not provided by a public institution of higher education, the district in which the individual is working must provide as part of an individual's application an assurance that the district will forward any payment received from MiLEAP to the individual's eligible EPP. The bill would delete this provision.

Currently, MiLEAP must pay each eligible EPP an amount not to exceed \$9,600 per academic semester for each eligible student teacher working in a district. The bill would apply this provision only to EPPs provided by a public institution of higher education. Currently, if the individual's eligible EPP is not provided by a public institution of higher education, MiLEAP must transmit payment to the district in which the individual is working as a student teacher. That district must forward the amount received to the individual's eligible EPP. Under the bill, MiLEAP also could transmit payment to the following, provided that the recipient forwarded the funds to the individual's EPP:

- The intermediate district or consortium of intermediate districts that provided funding to the qualifying publicly funded preschool program in the State in which the individual was placed as a student teacher.
- An intermediate district or consortium of intermediate districts.

The bill would define "qualifying publicly funded preschool program in this state" as a program supported by public funds as determined by MiLEAP, including, but not limited to, programs funded by the GSRP or Head Start (see **BACKGROUND**).

MCL 388.1627c

#### **PREVIOUS LEGISLATION**

*(This section does not provide a comprehensive account of previous legislative efforts on this subject matter.)*

Senate Bill 83 is similar to Senate Bill 995 of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session. Senate Bill 995 passed the Senate and was referred to the House Committee on Government Operations but received no further action.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The GSRP is Michigan's free preschool program for four-year-olds at risk for low educational attainment. The following eligibility factors may be used to demonstrate such a risk: 1) low family income, 2) diagnosed disability or identified developmental delay, 3) severe or challenging behavior, 4) primary home language other than English, 5) parent(s) with low educational attainment, 6) abuse/neglect of child or parent, and 7) environmental risk. A school must document these factors, which may be used to develop a program for the child.

Local community organizations, such as school districts, nonprofits, and faith-based institutions, operate Head Start programs throughout the United States, including in Michigan. The United States Department of Health and Human Services funds these programs, which are designed to provide children access to free early education, health services, and family wellness resources. Early Head Start services aid families expecting or who have children up to three years of age. Head Start preschool services work with children ages three to five and their families. Families whose incomes are at or below the Federal Poverty Guidelines or who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program services also are eligible for Head Start services. Children in the foster care system or who are experiencing homelessness also are eligible. Some programs may accept a limited number of children who do not meet any of these eligibility criteria.

## **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

### **Supporting Argument**

The bill would support preschool teachers' education, helping to reduce the State's teacher shortage. Prospective teachers, especially those student teaching, may find pursuing their education expensive, as they often are not paid. The MI Future Educator Student Teacher Stipend Program offers student teachers a way to offset the cost of their education. Currently, student teachers working for preschool programs do not have access to this stipend. As such, they are missing out on a tool that could encourage them to finish their degrees and enter the workforce. Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education during the 2023-2024 Legislative Session indicated that several campus early childhood centers were in danger of closing, as many of their students had left their programs, unable to cover the costs. The closure of these programs would not only reduce student teaching opportunities for the remaining students but harm the children and families served by such sites. The State already suffers from a lack of teachers. It should continue to invest in growing the teaching workforce, which the bill would contribute to.

### **Supporting Argument**

The bill would help the State in its efforts to provide universal preschool. In January 2023, Governor Gretchen Whitmer verbalized her goal to provide every four-year-old in the State with access to free prekindergarten by 2027. Over the past couple of years, the State has further funded preschool programs like GSRP to expand access. These programs need qualified teachers, the demand for whom will only increase. Enacting the bill would encourage the growth of the preschool teacher workforce.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the State or local units of government. The provisions of the bill would allow a student teacher to receive a stipend if the student teacher completed a student teaching requirement at a qualifying public preschool program, in addition to a district, as is currently allowed. The amount of the stipend paid to student teachers in preschools would be the same as is currently paid to student teachers in a district, so there would be no change in the total cost to the State. Also, there is no reason to believe that the change would result in more students enrolling in teacher preparation programs, so the total cost to the State for stipends in a given year would not change.

Fiscal Analyst: Ryan Bergan

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.