

1 AN ACT

2 RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; ENACTING THE GROW YOUR OWN
3 TEACHERS ACT; PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS FOR EDUCATIONAL
4 ASSISTANTS WHO WANT TO BECOME TEACHERS; CREATING A FUND;
5 ALLOWING FOR PROFESSIONAL LEAVE FOR CLASSES AND PRACTICE
6 TEACHING; PROVIDING FOR APPROPRIATE DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR
7 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS WHO DO NOT LIVE NEAR A PUBLIC POST-
8 SECONDARY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM.

9
10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

11 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.--Sections 1 through 8 of this
12 act may be cited as the "Grow Your Own Teachers Act".

13 SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Grow Your Own
14 Teachers Act:

15 A. "department" means the higher education
16 department;

17 B. "educational assistant" means a United States
18 citizen and resident of New Mexico who has worked as an
19 educational assistant in a public school for at least two
20 years and is in good standing with the school district and
21 who is enrolled in or accepted by an undergraduate teacher
22 preparation program at a regionally accredited public post-
23 secondary educational institution in New Mexico;

24 C. "public school" includes constitutional special
25 schools and state institutions and state agencies that

1 educate children and employ educational assistants; and

2 D. "teacher preparation program" means a program
3 that has been formally approved as meeting the requirements
4 of the public education department and that leads to level
5 one teacher licensure, including a program in a two-year
6 post-secondary educational institution that meets the
7 requirements for a teacher education transfer module
8 established pursuant to Subsection C of Section 21-1B-4 NMSA
9 1978.

10 SECTION 3. FUND CREATED--METHOD OF PAYMENT.--The "grow
11 your own teachers fund" is created in the state treasury.
12 The fund consists of money appropriated for scholarships
13 pursuant to the Grow Your Own Teachers Act, earnings from
14 investment of the fund, gifts, grants and donations to the
15 fund. Money in the fund shall not revert at the end of a
16 fiscal year. The fund shall be administered by the
17 department. All payments of money for loans shall be made on
18 warrants drawn by the secretary of finance and administration
19 pursuant to vouchers signed by the secretary of higher
20 education or the secretary's designated representative.

21 SECTION 4. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS--TEACHER
22 PREPARATION--PROFESSIONAL LEAVE.--

23 A. An educational assistant who wants to become a
24 teacher may petition the public school in which the
25 educational assistant is employed to grant professional leave

1 for college classes, examinations and practice teaching, as
2 needed. The public school shall grant professional leave if
3 the educational assistant is a recipient of a scholarship
4 pursuant to the Grow Your Own Teachers Act.

5 B. If an educational assistant who is accepted
6 into or enrolled in a teacher preparation program offered by
7 a regionally accredited public post-secondary educational
8 institution in New Mexico does not live within a reasonable
9 distance of the public post-secondary educational
10 institution's campus, the public school shall allow the
11 educational assistant to use the distance education resources
12 of the school district to take classes.

13 SECTION 5. CONDITIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY.--A scholarship
14 may be awarded to an educational assistant who:

15 A. has not earned appropriate educational
16 credentials to be licensed as a teacher by the public
17 education department;

18 B. has demonstrated financial need consistent with
19 the criteria promulgated by the department; and

20 C. has complied with other rules promulgated by
21 the department to carry out the provisions of the Grow Your
22 Own Teachers Act.

23 SECTION 6. SCHOLARSHIP AUTHORIZED--ADMINISTRATION--
24 PREFERENCE IN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS.--

1 A. The department shall administer the Grow Your
2 Own Teachers Act and shall promulgate rules to carry out the
3 provisions of that act.

4 B. Scholarships shall be awarded to qualified
5 educational assistants. Qualifications shall be determined
6 by rule of the department.

7 C. The department shall allocate money to public
8 post-secondary educational institutions based on a student
9 need formula calculated according to income reported on the
10 free application for federal student aid and on the number of
11 students enrolled in each public education department-
12 approved teacher preparation program at a New Mexico public
13 post-secondary educational institution.

14 D. Public post-secondary educational institutions
15 shall make awards to qualifying eligible students based on
16 financial need in an amount not to exceed six thousand
17 dollars (\$6,000) per year for not more than five years as
18 determined by rule of the department.

19 E. Money for the scholarship shall be placed in an
20 account at the public post-secondary educational institution
21 in the name of the educational assistant, and the money may
22 be drawn upon to pay educational expenses charged by the
23 institution, including tuition, fees, books and course
24 supplies.

25 **SECTION 7. DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIP.--**Each scholarship

1 is for a period of one semester. A scholarship may be
2 renewed, as long as the educational assistant continues to
3 meet the conditions of eligibility, until the educational
4 assistant graduates from a public post-secondary educational
5 institution.

6 SECTION 8. TERMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIP.--A scholarship
7 is terminated upon occurrence of one or more of the
8 following:

9 A. the educational assistant withdraws from the
10 public post-secondary educational institution or from the
11 teacher preparation program, or the educational assistant
12 fails to remain at least a half-time student;

13 B. the educational assistant fails to achieve
14 satisfactory academic progress; or

15 C. the educational assistant is in substantial
16 noncompliance with the Grow Your Own Teachers Act or the
17 rules promulgated pursuant to that act.

18 SECTION 9. TEMPORARY PROVISION--HIGHER EDUCATION
19 DEPARTMENT RULES--CONSULTATION WITH PUBLIC EDUCATION
20 DEPARTMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS--PUBLIC EDUCATION
21 DEPARTMENT TO REPORT FINDINGS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.--

22 A. At any time before releasing proposed initial
23 rules for the Grow Your Own Teachers Act, the higher
24 education department shall consult with the public education
25 department, and the two departments shall convene or survey a

