

**SB74 INTRODUCED**



1 SB74  
2 RBHQIYM-1  
3 By Senator Chesteen  
4 RFD: Education Policy  
5 First Read: 13-Jan-26



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4     SYNOPSIS:

5                 Under existing law, the Alabama Commission on  
6     Higher Education administers the Alabama Math and  
7     Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP), which  
8     provides a loan repayment award to eligible public K-12  
9     math, science, and computer science teachers and an  
10    additional loan repayment award to the eligible  
11    applicants who are employed in underserved locations in  
12    the state.

13                This bill would change the name of the program  
14    to the Loan Assistance in Support of Educators in  
15    Alabama (LASEA) Program and would expand program  
16    eligibility to address additional educator shortages by  
17    extending eligibility for loan assistance to educators  
18    with certification in acute educator shortage programs  
19    and providing additional loan assistance if those  
20    educators are employed by public K-12 schools or school  
21    systems recognized as acute educator shortage  
22    locations.

23                This bill would specify that the Alabama  
24    Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with  
25    the State Department of Education, would determine  
26    which programs, schools, and school systems have acute  
27    educator shortages.

28                This bill would also require the commission, in



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29                   consultation with the Alabama Commission on the  
30                   Evaluation of Services, to develop an accountability  
31                   and evaluation plan for the program and would provide  
32                   further for the eligibility of certain applicants who  
33                   have been continuously employed with a qualifying  
34                   school.

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37                   A BILL  
38                   TO BE ENTITLED  
39                   AN ACT

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41                   Relating to the Alabama Math and Science Teacher  
42                   Education Program (AMSTEP); to change the name of the program  
43                   to the Loan Assistance in Support of Educators in Alabama  
44                   (LASEA) Program; to amend Sections 16-5-50, 16-5-51, 16-5-52,  
45                   16-5-53, 16-5-54, 16-5-54.1, 16-5-55, and 16-5-56, Code of  
46                   Alabama 1975; to allow educators who complete a program  
47                   identified as having a shortage of certified educators and who  
48                   obtain certification in those identified programs to qualify  
49                   for the loan assistance program; to offer a supplemental  
50                   payment from the loan assistance program to eligible  
51                   applicants who are also employed in public K-12 schools or  
52                   school systems with a shortage of certified educators as  
53                   determined by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in  
54                   consultation with the State Department of Education; to add  
55                   Sections 16-5-53.1 and 16-5-53.2 to the Code of Alabama 1975,  
56                   to require the commission, in consultation with the Alabama

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57 Commission on the Evaluation of Services, to develop an  
58 accountability and evaluation plan for the program and to  
59 provide further for the eligibility of certain applicants who  
60 have been continuously employed with a qualifying school; and  
61 to repeal Section 16-5-54.2, Code of Alabama 1975, which  
62 provides for the reimbursement of individuals who have  
63 completed certain alternative certification programs.

64 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

65 Section 1. Sections 16-5-50, 16-5-51, 16-5-52, 16-5-53,  
66 16-5-54, 16-5-54.1, 16-5-55, and 16-5-56 of the Code of  
67 Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

68 "§16-5-50

69 The Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program  
70 ~~is~~ created pursuant to this article is renamed the Loan  
71 Assistance in Support of Educators in Alabama (LASEA)  
72 Program."

73 "§16-5-51

74 The purpose of the ~~Alabama Math and Science Teacher~~  
75 ~~Education Program~~ Loan Assistance in Support of Educators in  
76 Alabama Program is ~~twofold~~ as follows:

77 (1) To encourage individuals to enroll in and complete  
78 educator programs ~~leading to~~ identified as having acute  
79 educator shortages and obtain Alabama certification in  
80 ~~mathematics, science, or computer science~~ those programs.

81 (2) To improve the educational system in Alabama by  
82 encouraging those who complete ~~the program and obtain~~  
83 certification in acute educator shortage programs to accept  
84 ~~math, science, or computer science teaching~~ educator positions



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85 in Alabama public K-12 schools, ~~preferably in public or~~ school  
86 systems, including charter schools, ~~where the shortage of~~  
87 ~~math, science, or computer science teachers, or any~~  
88 ~~combination of the three, is most acute, or in a school that~~  
89 ~~has been designated as a failing school, or any other term~~  
90 ~~adopted to identify an underperforming school, by the State~~  
91 ~~Board of Education or the Legislature that have been~~  
92 identified as acute educator shortage locations."

93 "§16-5-52

94 For the purposes of this article, the following terms  
95 ~~shall~~ have the following meanings:

96 (1) ACUTE EDUCATOR SHORTAGE. A shortage of certified  
97 educators in identified educator programs as determined by the  
98 Alabama Commission on Higher Education in consultation with  
99 the State Department of Education and the Alabama Commission  
100 on the Evaluation of Services.

101 (2) ACUTE EDUCATOR SHORTAGE LOCATION. A public K-12  
102 school or school system that has been identified as having an  
103 acute educator shortage.

104 ~~(1)~~ (3) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A state-supported  
105 institution of higher education or a private nonprofit  
106 institution of higher education that satisfies all of the  
107 following:

108 a. Is accredited by the Southern Association of  
109 Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

110 b. Is approved by the State Board of Education to  
111 ~~prepare teachers of middle level or secondary math, science,~~  
112 ~~or computer science~~ educators in programs identified as having



113 an acute educator shortage.

114       c. Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid  
115       program funds.

116       ~~d. Maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.~~

117       (4) BASE SUPPORT. Loan assistance in support of  
118       educators who are certified in a program identified as having  
119       an acute educator shortage pursuant to Section 16-5-54.

120       ~~(2)~~(5) CHARTER SCHOOL. A form of public K-12 school-A  
121       teacher established pursuant to Chapter 6F. An educator  
122       employed by a charter school accredited by the Southern  
123       Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is  
124       eligible to participate in the program. A teacher for the base  
125       support provided in this article. An educator employed by a  
126       charter school is not eligible for the acute shortage area  
127       supplement supplemental support provided in this article.

128       ~~(3)~~(6) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher  
129       Education.

130       (7) EDUCATOR. A full-time employee of a public K-12  
131       school or school system whose function is to work with  
132       students in support of their efforts to learn and obtain an  
133       education.

134       ~~(4)~~(8) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT. A person An individual who  
135       satisfies the criteria set out in this article and is eligible  
136       under rules adopted by the commission.

137       ~~(5)~~(9) PROGRAM. The Alabama Math and Science Teacher  
138       Education Program Loan Assistance in Support of Educators in  
139       Alabama Program created by this article and administered by  
140       the commission that provides loan repayments assistance to a



141 teacher an educator with a valid Alabama professional educator  
142 certificate who is endorsed in ~~math, science, or computer~~  
143 ~~science who teaches math, science, or computer science courses~~  
144 ~~for which the teacher is properly certified for three-fourths~~  
145 ~~of the full-time teaching load in the Alabama public school~~  
146 ~~system~~ a program identified as having an acute educator  
147 shortage.

148 ~~(6) SCIENCE. Biology, chemistry, physics, and general~~  
149 ~~science.~~

150 (10) SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT. Loan assistance in support  
151 of educators who qualify for base support pursuant to Section  
152 16-5-54 and are employed in an acute educator shortage  
153 location.

154 ~~(7) (11) YEAR.~~ ~~A school year that shall be divided into~~  
155 The fall and spring semesters. ~~The term does not mean~~  
156 ~~calendar, fiscal, or scholastic year of an academic year of a~~  
157 public K-12 school or school system."

158 "§16-5-53

159 (a) The Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education  
160 Program program shall be administered by the commission, which  
161 may adopt ~~any~~ rules necessary for the administration of the  
162 program.

163 (b) A percentage of any annual appropriations received  
164 by the program, not to exceed 10 percent, may be expended for  
165 its operation and maintenance. Any funds appropriated to the  
166 program shall be non-reverting at the end of each fiscal year.

167 (c) The determination of acute educator shortages and  
168 acute educator shortage locations shall be made at least once



169 every academic year."

170 "§16-5-54

171 (a) The program shall provide two levels of payment for  
172 loan assistance: (i) base support in the amount of seven  
173 thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) per year worked or  
174 three thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$3,750) per  
175 semester, for a maximum of four consecutive years, and (ii)  
176 supplemental support in the amount of three thousand dollars  
177 (\$3,000) per year worked or one thousand five hundred dollars  
178 (\$1,500) per semester worked, for a maximum of four  
179 consecutive years. Depending on eligibility, an eligible  
180 applicant may receive the base support or both the base  
181 support and supplemental support.

182 (b) To be eligible for the base ~~program of three~~  
183 ~~thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$3,750) per semester for~~  
184 ~~math and science teachers and one thousand five hundred~~  
185 ~~dollars (\$1,500) per semester for computer science teachers,~~  
186 ~~an~~ support an eligible applicant shall satisfy all of the  
187 following:

188 (1) Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the  
189 United States.

190 (2) Is a resident of Alabama. The commission shall  
191 accept any one of the following as proof of residency:

- 192 a. A current valid Alabama driver license.
- 193 b. A current valid Alabama vehicle registration.
- 194 c. A current valid Alabama voter registration card.

195 (1) ~~Be~~ (3) Is a graduate of a State Board of Education  
196 an approved program ~~in math, science, or computer science,~~ at



197 the baccalaureate or master's level ~~after the 2018 spring~~  
198 ~~semester term~~ from an approved ~~Alabama~~ institution and ~~hold an~~  
199 ~~initial middle level or secondary professional educator~~  
200 ~~certificate endorsed in math, science, or computer science~~  
201 ~~that was has been issued an Alabama educator certificate~~ based  
202 upon completion of the approved program ~~in math, science, or~~  
203 ~~computer science. A teacher identified as having an acute~~  
204 ~~educator shortage. An educator who only earns a passing score~~  
205 on the Praxis test ~~in math, science, or computer science~~ to  
206 add a certificate endorsement for ~~math, science, or computer~~  
207 ~~science, an approved program and who has not completed an~~  
208 ~~entire the~~ approved program, does not satisfy this  
209 requirement.

210 (2) ~~Holds a valid Alabama professional educator~~  
211 ~~certificate endorsed in middle level or secondary math,~~  
212 ~~science, or computer science, or any combination of the three.~~

213 (3) ~~Teaches~~

214 (4) Is employed by a public K-12 school or school  
215 system.

216 (5) Maintains a schedule in which at least  
217 three-fourths of the full-time ~~teaching load is comprised of~~  
218 ~~math, science, or computer science in an Alabama public school~~  
219 ~~system workload addresses an acute educator shortage.~~

220 (4) ~~Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the~~  
221 ~~United States.~~

222 (5) ~~Is a resident of Alabama and provides documentation~~  
223 ~~proving a permanent connection to the State of Alabama. The~~  
224 ~~commission shall accept any one of the following as proof of~~



225 ~~residency:~~

226 a. ~~A current valid Alabama driver license.~~

227 b. ~~A current valid Alabama vehicle registration.~~

228 c. ~~A current valid Alabama voter registration card.~~

229 (6) Has outstanding federal student loans, subsidized  
230 or unsubsidized.

231 (7) Satisfies additional continuing eligibility  
232 criteria established by the commission.

233 ~~(b) In order to receive an additional supplement~~  
234 ~~pursuant to this article, in addition to the criteria listed~~  
235 ~~in subsection (a), a recipient shall also teach math, science,~~  
236 ~~or computer science, or any combination of the three, in a~~  
237 ~~public school system within the state with an acute teacher~~  
238 ~~shortage in math, science, or computer science, or any~~  
239 ~~combination of the three, for which the teacher is properly~~  
240 ~~certified, as identified by the commission in consultation~~  
241 ~~with the Alabama State Department of Education or in a school~~  
242 ~~that has been designated as a failing school, or any other~~  
243 ~~term adopted to identify an underperforming school, by the~~  
244 ~~Alabama State Board of Education or the Legislature.~~

245 (c) To be eligible for the supplemental support an eligible applicant  
246 must meet the criteria listed in subsection (b) and also be  
247 employed in an acute educator shortage location."

248 "§16-5-54.1

249 ~~(a) Beginning in the fall semester of 2021, the~~  
250 ~~benefits outlined in subsection (a) of Section 16-5-54 (a) and~~  
251 ~~the criteria outlined in Section 16-5-54 (b) and (c) shall also~~  
252 ~~apply to the following eligible individuals, pending~~



253 authorization to teach who are authorized to be educators in  
254 Alabama and subsequent employment are subsequently employed in  
255 an Alabama public K-12 school ~~+~~ or school system, who graduated  
256 from a regionally accredited college or university in another  
257 state at the baccalaureate or master's level after the 2021  
258 spring semester term, and who may or may not reside within  
259 Alabama, exempting Section 16-5-54(b)(2).

260 ~~(1) An individual who graduated from a regionally~~  
261 ~~accredited college or university in Alabama or in another~~  
262 ~~state who is certified to teach math, science, or computer~~  
263 ~~science in another state, and who may or may not reside within~~  
264 ~~Alabama.~~

265 ~~(2) An individual who resides in another state and is a~~  
266 ~~graduate of a State Board of Education approved program in~~  
267 ~~math, science, or computer science, at the baccalaureate or~~  
268 ~~master's level after the 2021 spring semester term from an~~  
269 ~~approved Alabama institution and who holds an initial~~  
270 ~~middle-level or secondary professional educator certificate~~  
271 ~~endorsed in math, science, or computer science that was issued~~  
272 ~~based upon completion of the approved program in math,~~  
273 ~~science, or computer science. A teacher who only earns a~~  
274 ~~passing score on the Praxis test in math, science, or computer~~  
275 ~~science to add a certificate endorsement for math, science, or~~  
276 ~~computer science and who has not completed an entire approved~~  
277 ~~program, does not satisfy this requirement.~~

278 ~~(b) The individuals listed in subsection (a) shall also~~  
279 ~~satisfy all of the following criteria:~~

280 ~~(1) Hold a valid Alabama professional educator~~



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281 certificate endorsed in middle-level or secondary math,  
282 science, or computer science, or any combination of the three.

283 (2) Teach a schedule in which at least three-fourths of  
284 the full-time teaching load is comprised of math, science, or  
285 computer science courses for which the teacher is properly  
286 certified in an Alabama public school system.

287 (3) Be citizens or lawful permanent residents of the  
288 United States.

289 (4) Have outstanding federal student loans, subsidized  
290 or unsubsidized.

291 (5) Satisfy additional continuing eligibility criteria  
292 established by the commission.

293 (c) In order to receive an additional supplement  
294 pursuant to this article, in addition to the criteria listed  
295 in subsections (a) and (b), a recipient shall also teach math,  
296 science, or computer science courses, or any combination of  
297 the three, for which he or she is properly certified, in a  
298 school system within the state with an acute teacher shortage  
299 in math, science, or computer science, or any combination of  
300 the three, as identified by the commission in consultation  
301 with the State Department of Education or in a school that has  
302 been designated as a failing school, or any other term  
303 subsequently adopted to identify underperforming schools, by  
304 the State Board of Education or the Legislature."

305 "§16-5-55

306 (a) The program shall be used to provide a loan  
307 repayment for federal student loans in the following amounts:

308 (1) a. Prior to the 2022 fall semester, five thousand



309 ~~dollars (\$5,000) per year, or two thousand five hundred~~  
310 ~~dollars (\$2,500) per semester worked, for a maximum of four~~  
311 ~~consecutive years for a teacher with a valid Alabama~~  
312 ~~professional educator certificate endorsed in middle level or~~  
313 ~~secondary math or science who graduated from a teacher~~  
314 ~~education program at an approved institution after the 2018~~  
315 ~~spring semester term and is teaching in an Alabama public~~  
316 ~~school.~~

317 ~~b. Three thousand dollars (\$3,000) per year, or one~~  
318 ~~thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) per semester worked,~~  
319 ~~for a maximum of four consecutive years for a teacher with a~~  
320 ~~valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in~~  
321 ~~computer science who graduated from a teacher education~~  
322 ~~program at an approved institution after the 2021 spring~~  
323 ~~semester term and is teaching in an Alabama public school.~~

324 ~~c. Beginning after the 2022 spring semester, seven~~  
325 ~~thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) per year, or three~~  
326 ~~thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$3,750) per semester~~  
327 ~~worked, for a maximum of four consecutive years for a teacher~~  
328 ~~with a valid Alabama professional educator certificate~~  
329 ~~endorsed in middle level or secondary math or science who~~  
330 ~~graduated from a teacher education program at an approved~~  
331 ~~institution after the 2018 spring semester term and is~~  
332 ~~teaching in an Alabama public school. Payments made under this~~  
333 ~~paragraph may only be made to eligible teachers who fulfilled~~  
334 ~~the per semester requirements for the 2022 fall semester and~~  
335 ~~forward.~~

336 ~~(2) a. An additional two thousand five hundred dollars~~



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337 ~~(\$2,500) per year, or one thousand two hundred fifty dollars~~  
338 ~~(\$1,250) per semester worked, for a maximum of four~~  
339 ~~consecutive years for a teacher who satisfies all criteria~~  
340 ~~listed in Sections 16-5-54, 16-5-54.1, and 16-5-54.2, and who~~  
341 ~~also is teaching math or science in a public school in a~~  
342 ~~school system within the state with an acute teacher shortage~~  
343 ~~in math or science, or both, as identified by the commission~~  
344 ~~in consultation with the Alabama State Department of Education~~  
345 ~~or in a school that has been designated as a failing school,~~  
346 ~~or any other term adopted to identify an underperforming~~  
347 ~~school by the Alabama State Board of Education or the~~  
348 ~~Legislature.~~

349       b. An additional one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per  
350 ~~year, or five hundred dollars (\$500) per semester worked, for~~  
351 ~~a maximum of four consecutive years for a teacher who~~  
352 ~~satisfies all criteria listed in Sections 16-5-54, 16-5-54.1,~~  
353 ~~and 16-5-54.2, and who also is teaching computer science in a~~  
354 ~~public school in a school system within the state with an~~  
355 ~~acute teacher shortage in computer science as identified by~~  
356 ~~the commission in consultation with the Alabama State~~  
357 ~~Department of Education or in a school that has been~~  
358 ~~designated as a failing school, or any other term adopted to~~  
359 ~~identify an underperforming school, by the Alabama State Board~~  
360 ~~of Education or the Legislature.~~

361       (b) ~~Loan repayment award recipients shall reapply for~~  
362 ~~the program annually.~~

363       (a) Program funds shall be awarded and distributed by  
364 the commission in the following manner:



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365        ~~(e)~~ (1) Loan-repayment assistance awards shall be  
366        distributed directly to ~~the recipient teacher~~ eligible  
367        applicants in two disbursements during the applicable year:  
368        One disbursement shall be made after January 1 and the second  
369        disbursement shall be made after June 1. Each ~~recipient~~  
370        eligible applicant shall provide documentation from the  
371        employing public K-12 school or school system as proof ~~that he~~  
372        ~~or she has taught for a~~ of employment for the requested  
373        semester. If the award amount ~~is larger than~~ exceeds the  
374        ~~outstanding~~ loan balance, the award amount shall be reduced to  
375        ~~the amount of~~ match the loan balance.

376        ~~(d) The requirements of this article are contingent~~  
377        ~~upon available funding for the program.~~

378        ~~(e)~~ (2) The commission shall determine the necessary  
379        procedures for awarding loan ~~repayments~~ assistance if the  
380        ~~number of~~ total awards made to eligible applicants ~~and~~  
381        ~~recipients~~ exceeds available funding.

382        ~~(f)~~ (3) The ~~recipient~~ eligible applicant shall notify  
383        the commission in writing of any change in status within 30  
384        days after the change. Failure to notify the commission of a  
385        change in status shall affect future eligibility. All of the  
386        following constitute a change in status:

387        ~~(1)~~a. A change in name.  
388        ~~(2)~~b. A change in residence.  
389        ~~(3)~~c. A change in employment status.  
390        ~~(g)~~ (4) To receive ~~a~~ loan ~~repayment check~~ assistance  
391        pursuant to this article, ~~a teacher~~ an eligible applicant  
392        shall register online with the ~~state~~ Comptroller.



393        (b) The requirements of this article are contingent  
394 upon available funding for the program.

395        ~~(h)~~ (c) A loan repayment check assistance award is  
396 considered income by the Internal Revenue Service, and  
397 recipients eligible applicants shall be made aware of that  
398 fact.

399        ~~(i) Any funds appropriated to the program shall be~~  
400 ~~nonreverting.~~

401        ~~(j) Additional funds shall be made available to~~  
402 ~~teachers who also teach math, science, or computer science in~~  
403 ~~school systems of the state where the shortages of math,~~  
404 ~~science, or computer science teachers, or any combination of~~  
405 ~~the three, are most severe. The commission, in consultation~~  
406 ~~with the Alabama State Department of Education, shall~~  
407 ~~determine which school systems in the state have the greatest~~  
408 ~~shortage areas.~~

409        ~~(k) A recipient who receives a loan repayment award and~~  
410 ~~continues to satisfy employment criteria shall continue to~~  
411 ~~receive an award for the four-year limit regardless of whether~~  
412 ~~the employing school system retains its acute shortage~~  
413 ~~designation or the employing school is removed from the~~  
414 ~~failing school list. If a recipient leaves an acute shortage~~  
415 ~~system or a failing school and accepts employment in a school~~  
416 ~~system or school that does not hold an acute shortage system~~  
417 ~~or failing school designation, the recipient shall no longer~~  
418 ~~qualify to receive supplemental funds.~~

419        (d) An eligible applicant who receives the base support  
420 and continues to satisfy employment criteria shall continue to



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421 receive an award for the four-year limit.

422 (e) An eligible applicant who receives the supplemental  
423 support and continues to satisfy employment criteria shall  
424 continue to receive an award for the four-year limit."

425 "§16-5-56

426 Any ~~person~~ individual or institution ~~aggrieved by~~ not  
427 satisfied with the actions of the commission in its  
428 administration of the program ~~by~~ may submit a written  
429 petition ~~filed with~~ to the commission within 30 days after  
430 notice of the action ~~complained of, may request a rehearing by~~  
431 ~~the commission.~~ If not satisfied with the response of the  
432 commission to the written petition, the individual or  
433 institution may request a rehearing within 20 days after the  
434 response of the commission is made. The commission shall  
435 schedule the ~~requested~~ rehearing ~~not less than 20, nor more~~  
436 ~~than 30,~~ within 20 days after receipt of the ~~petition~~  
437 rehearing request. The ~~aggrieved party~~ individual or  
438 institution may present written and oral evidence supporting  
439 ~~its~~ the petition and may be represented by counsel. The  
440 decision of the commission following the rehearing ~~shall be~~ is  
441 final."

442 Section 2. Sections 16-5-53.1 and 16-5-53.2 are added to  
443 the Code of Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

444 §16-5-53.1

445 (a) The commission shall develop an accountability and  
446 evaluation plan for the program that does all of the  
447 following:

448 (1) Identifies the goals, objectives, and expected

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449 outputs and outcomes of the program.

450 (2) Describes the specific activities of the program  
451 and how those activities will achieve expected outcomes.

452 (3) Defines what the expected metrics of success shall  
453 be and provides a monitoring plan to regularly assess  
454 performance.

455 (4) Provides an evaluation plan to assess the impact of  
456 expected outcomes.

457 (b) The commission shall consult with the Alabama  
458 Commission on the Evaluation of Services on the development of  
459 the accountability and evaluation plan.

460 §16-5-53.2

461 Any eligible applicant who met the requirements of the  
462 program and received a loan repayment prior to August 1, 2026,  
463 shall remain eligible for loan repayments pursuant to the  
464 requirements of the program as long as they remain  
465 continuously employed with a qualifying school.

466 Section 3. Section 16-5-54.2, Code of Alabama 1975,  
467 relating to documentation required from educators who received  
468 their certifications pursuant to an alternative certification  
469 program to receive loan repayments under AMSTEP, is repealed.

470 Section 4. This act shall become effective on August 1,  
471 2026.