



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Sharon Katt

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Approve revisions to Rule 25 (92 NAC 25) *Regulations Governing the Excellence in Teaching Act.*

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Excellence in Teaching Act (ETA) is implemented through Rule 25 (92 NAC 25) and includes the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (AETP) and the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program (EETP). Both programs are restricted to awards to individuals in Nebraska teacher preparation programs and require several years of teaching in a Nebraska school to qualify for forgiveness. The ETA is currently funded at \$1.2 million per year and awards are limited to \$3,000 per individual.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

The revisions to Rule 25 are proposed pursuant to Sections 79-8, 132 through 79-8, 140 of the *Nebraska Revised Statutes* which incorporate changes created by LB519, LB525, and LB1066.

Substantive changes include:

- The criteria for eligibility have been expanded to include a graduate course of study leading to an **additional endorsement in a shortage area along with the current degree program criteria.**
- Loan forgiveness timeline for recipients receiving EETP funds for the first time on or after July 1, 2016.

Other minor changes have been made to clarify existing language related to current practice and to enhance consistency throughout the Rule.

The purpose of the AETP is directed at attracting and retaining individuals into teaching through awards during preparation and forgiveness upon meeting teaching requirements.

STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

- The 2015-16 award year marked the tenth year of the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program. To date, 1179 AETP loans totaling just under \$3.3 million have been awarded to eligible students seeking their initial teaching certificate.

STATUS OF THE BORROWERS

- 50% have been cancelled by teaching
- 18% are currently teaching
- 16% are currently enrolled in their program
- 15% are repaying, have repaid, or had the award discharged
- 1% declined the funds

The purpose of the EETP is to provide awards to eligible teachers in certain programs to improve the skills of existing teachers through graduate education programs and forgiveness of those loans upon meeting teaching requirements.

STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

- The 2015-16 award year marked the seventh year of the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program with funding provided for five of those years. To date, 2233 loans totaling just under \$4.3 million have been awarded to eligible students seeking an advanced degree.

STATUS OF THE BORROWERS

- 36% are currently enrolled in their program
- 31% are currently teaching
- 25% have been cancelled by teaching
- 5% are repaying, have repaid, or had the award discharged
- 3% declined the funds

ESTIMATED COST: \$600.00 for costs associated with the Public Hearing and for print copies for distribution upon approval of the revised rule.