

Governor Carney Signs High-Needs Educator Student Loan Payment Program into Law

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Wednesday signed House Substitute 1 for House Bill 346 into law at McKean High School surrounded by school administrators, advocates, teachers and members of the General Assembly. This legislation offers up to \$10,000 in student loan relief for educators in high-needs schools and subject areas.

“This legislation will help us recruit and retain educators into high-needs schools and subject areas, and help support educators who serve Delaware’s most vulnerable students,” said **Governor Carney**. “Thank you to Representative Bentz, Senator Townsend, the Delaware State Education Association, and members of the General Assembly of both parties for their efforts on this piece of legislation. It is my honor to sign it into law to help ensure every Delaware child gets the high-quality education they deserve.”

The legislation will provide up to \$2,000 of student loan assistance annually to educators who qualify. Educators may qualify for up to five years of assistance.

Governor Carney called for passage of this legislation in his 2018 State of the State Address.

“Novice teachers are often challenged by hefty college loan debt, which in turn can make other career options that initially pay higher salaries more attractive. This bill offers an important support to attract and retain educators in the schools and subjects where we need them the most,” said **Dr. Susan Bunting, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Education**.

“Dedicated teachers who serve some of our highest-need schools and students deserve recognition for their commitment to future generations,” said **Representative David Bentz**, prime sponsor of the legislation. “They are helping students succeed by providing extra assistance and working closely with them. Their commitment to their students is the cornerstone of our educational system. Forgiving some of their loan debt is a small way of showing our commitment to those teachers and the students they educate. By doing this, we will hopefully encourage them to continue their hard work with their students.”

“Teaching is a public service, a professional challenge, and oftentimes a financial sacrifice,” said **Senator Bryan Townsend**. “Teachers are the most important investment we can make in the classroom, and the ones who want to work in our highest-need schools shouldn’t have to choose between helping kids tap into their potential and paying their student loans. We owe a lot more to our teachers, but helping them with the albatross of student loan debt is a good start.”

“We are so excited for this bill to be signed today. This student loan forgiveness program will help educators of all ages who have student debt and work in our high-needs subject areas and high needs schools,” said **Mike Matthews, President of the Delaware State Education Association**. “It’s another great way to incentivize this work while helping to attract and retain quality educators in Delaware.”

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