A bill to establish a financial aid program for certain individuals working as educational paraprofessionals in K-12 education programs who seek postsecondary degrees in teaching-related fields; to provide for the administration of the financial aid program; and to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain state officers, agencies, and departments.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

Sec. 1. This act may be cited as the "paraprofessional to teacher pathways grant act".

Sec. 2. As used in this act:
(a) "Community college" means a community college established under the community college act of 1966, 1966 PA 331, MCL 389.1 to 389.195, or under part 25 of the revised school code, 1976 PA 451, MCL 380.1601 to 380.1607.

(b) "Department" means the department of education.

(c) "Educational paraprofessional" means a teacher aid employed in a K-12 education program or other individual employed in and having responsibility for assisting with student instruction in a K-12 education program.

(d) "Full-time" means at least 30 hours per week.

(e) "Part-time" means at least 15 hours per week.

(f) "Public university" means a state university described in section 4, 5, or 6 of article VIII of the state constitution of 1963.

Sec. 3. The paraprofessional to teacher pathways grant program is created in the department for the purpose of providing grants under this act to individuals eligible for those grants under sections 4 and 5. The department shall do all of the following:

(a) Develop and administer the program as a dual-pathway program that awards grants as follows:

(i) Pathway I grants to individuals seeking associate degrees in education-related fields who are eligible under section 4.

(ii) Pathway II grants to individuals seeking baccalaureate degrees in education-related fields who are eligible under section 5.

(b) Develop and administer an annual application process for new and continuing Pathway I and Pathway II grant applicants.

(c) Develop the grant-repayment agreements described in sections 4(a)(v) and 5(a)(v).
(d) Conduct audits of grant recipients under this act to enforce the grant-repayment agreements described in sections 4(a)(v) and 5(a)(v).

(e) Promulgate rules to implement this act pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

Sec. 4. All of the following apply to the award of a Pathway I grant:

(a) The department shall award a Pathway I grant under this section to an individual only if he or she meets all of the following:

(i) Has graduated from high school with a diploma or certificate of completion or achieved a high school equivalency certificate. As used in this subparagraph, "high school equivalency certificate" means that term as defined in section 4 of the school aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1604.

(ii) Has not previously earned an associate or baccalaureate degree.

(iii) As of the date he or she first applies for a Pathway I grant, had been continuously employed as an educational paraprofessional full-time for the immediately preceding 3 years or part-time for the immediately preceding 5 years.

(iv) Is enrolled in or has been accepted for enrollment in a program at a community college leading to an associate degree in an education-related field, as determined by the department.

(v) Has entered into a written grant-repayment agreement with the department in which he or she agrees to repay all Pathway I grant money received under this act if either of the following applies:
(A) He or she does not complete the associate degree program described in subparagraph (iv) within 2 years of the average program completion time by a full-time student after the date he or she first received a Pathway I grant.

(B) He or she does not maintain continuous full-time employment for at least 3 years in an education-related position requiring the associate degree described in subparagraph (iv) beginning within 1 month before the start of the school year following his or her degree completion or 1 year after his or her degree completion, whichever is later.

(b) Subject to appropriation, an individual eligible for a Pathway I grant under this section may receive a grant in an amount not to exceed the lesser of the following:

(i) The tuition rate actually charged by the community college for the associate degree program described in subdivision (a)(iv).

(ii) The average tuition rate charged to in-district students attending associate degree programs at community colleges in this state that are the same as or similar to the associate degree program described in subdivision (a)(iv), as determined by the department.

(c) An individual is eligible for a Pathway I grant under this section until the occurrence of either of the following:

(i) The time frame described in subdivision (a)(v)(A) has passed.

(ii) The individual has obtained an associate degree.

Sec. 5. All of the following apply to the award of a Pathway II grant:

(a) The department shall award a Pathway II grant under this section to an individual only if he or she meets all of the
following:

(i) Has earned an associate degree in, or at least 2 years of college credit counting toward a baccalaureate degree in, an education-related field, as determined by the department.

(ii) Has not previously earned a baccalaureate degree.

(iii) As of the date he or she first applies for a Pathway II grant, had been continuously employed as an educational paraprofessional for 1 of the following:

(A) Full-time for the immediately preceding 3 years.

(B) Part-time for the immediately preceding 5 years.

(C) Part-time for the immediately preceding 3 years if the individual has completed an associate degree program supported by Pathway I grants under section 4 not more than 36 months before the date he or she first applies for a Pathway II grant.

(iv) Is enrolled in or has been accepted for enrollment in a program at a public university leading to a baccalaureate degree in an education-related field necessary for a teaching certificate, as determined by the department.

(v) Has entered into a written grant-repayment agreement with the department in which he or she agrees to repay all Pathway II grant money received under this act if either of the following applies:

(A) He or she does not complete the baccalaureate degree program described in subparagraph (iv) within 2 years of the average program completion time by a full-time student after the date he or she first received a Pathway II grant.

(B) He or she does not maintain continuous full-time employment for at least 5 years in an education-related position requiring the teaching certificate described in subparagraph (iv)
beginning within 1 month before the start of the school year following his or her certification or 6 months after his or her certification, whichever is later.

(vi) Has a letter of endorsement from a local school district guaranteeing employment of the individual as a teacher upon certification.

(b) Subject to appropriation, an individual eligible for a Pathway II grant under this section may receive a grant in an amount not to exceed the lesser of the following:

(i) The tuition rate actually charged by the public university for the baccalaureate degree program described in subdivision (a) (iv).

(ii) The average tuition rate charged to in-state students attending baccalaureate degree programs at public universities in this state that are the same as or similar to the baccalaureate degree program described in subdivision (a) (iv), as determined by the department.

(c) An individual is eligible for a Pathway II grant under this section until the occurrence of either of the following:

(i) The time frame described in subdivision (a) (v) (A) has passed.

(ii) The individual has obtained a baccalaureate degree.

Sec. 6. Money required to implement the paraprofessional to teacher pathways grant program created under this act is to be appropriated from the paraprofessional to teacher pathways grant fund created in section 3 of the paraprofessional to teacher pathways grant fund act and any other source the legislature considers necessary to implement this act.

Enacting section 1. This act does not take effect unless
Senate Bill No.____ or House Bill No. 6230 (request no. 06383'22) of the 101st Legislature is enacted into law.