

SHORT TITLE: Schools; creating Trailblazer Schools Act;
codification; effective date.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 46th Legislature (1997)

SENATE BILL NO. 592

By: Williams of the Senate

and

Bryant and Roach of the
House

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; creating Trailblazer Schools Act; providing short title; stating purpose; defining term; providing for certain requirements; requiring State Board of Education to establish standards and requirements; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-130 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

Sections 1 through 5 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the "Trailblazer Schools Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-131 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The purpose of the Trailblazer Schools Act is to:

1. Improve student learning;
2. Increase learning opportunities for students;
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching

methods;

4. Provide additional academic choices for parents and students;
5. Require the measurement of student learning and create different and innovative forms of measuring student learning;
6. Establish new forms of accountability for schools; and
7. Create new professional opportunities for teachers including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-132 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Trailblazer Schools Act shall only apply to schools formed and operated under the provisions of this act.

B. For purposes of the Trailblazer Schools Act, the term "trailblazer school" shall mean a public school established by contract with a board of education of a school district to provide learning that will improve student achievement.

C. Any board of education of a school district in this state may sponsor one or more trailblazer schools.

D. No more than twenty-five (25) trailblazer schools may be authorized to operate in this state at any one time.

SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-133 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. An applicant seeking to establish a trailblazer school shall submit a written proposal to a proposed sponsor in the form and as prescribed by the State Board of Education.

B. A public school, public body, public or private college or university, private person, or private organization may contract with a sponsor to establish a trailblazer school.

C. The sponsor of a trailblazer school may be any board of education of a school district in this state.

SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-134 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The State Board of Education shall establish standards and requirements for trailblazer schools. The State Board shall, in addition to any standards or requirements determined to be necessary, adopt standards and requirements that ensure compliance with the following:

1. A trailblazer school shall comply with all federal, state and local rules, regulations, and statutes relating to health, safety, civil rights, and insurance;

2. A trailblazer school shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. A sponsor may not authorize a school or program that is affiliated with a nonpublic sectarian school or religious institution;

3. A trailblazer school shall provide a comprehensive program of instruction for at least a kindergarten program or any grade of grades one through twelve. Instruction may also be provided to students regardless of their age. A trailblazer school may offer a curriculum which emphasizes a specific learning philosophy or style or certain subject areas such as mathematics, science, fine arts, performance arts, or foreign language;

4. A trailblazer school shall design its programs to at least meet the core curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Section 11-103.6 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes. The school shall also participate in the testing provided for in the Oklahoma School Testing Program Act;

5. Except as provided for in this act, a trailblazer school shall be exempt from all statutes and rules relating to schools, boards of education, and school districts;

6. A trailblazer school, to the extent possible, shall be subject to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit

requirements as a school district. The State Department of Education or State Auditor and Inspector may conduct financial, program, or compliance audits;

7. A trailblazer school shall comply with all federal and state laws relating to the education of children with disabilities in the same manner as a school district;

8. A trailblazer school shall have a governing body which shall be responsible for the policy and operational decisions of the school;

9. A trailblazer school shall not be used as a method of providing education or generating revenue for students who are being home-schooled;

10. A trailblazer school may not charge tuition;

11. A trailblazer school shall comply with the student suspension requirements provided for in Section 24-101 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

12. A trailblazer school is a school district for purposes of tort liability under the Governmental Tort Claims Act;

13. The governing body of a trailblazer school may not levy taxes or issue bonds; and

14. A trailblazer school shall not limit admission based on ethnicity, national origin, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, or athletic ability.

SECTION 6. This act shall become effective November 1, 1997.

46-1-0728

PHB