

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 47th Legislature (1999)

SENATE BILL NO. 22

By: Horner

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to higher education; establishing the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) for Teacher Preparation; providing priority consideration for certain prospective teachers; stating qualifications for certain scholarship; requiring teaching commitment from scholarship recipients; providing for the repayment of certain disbursed monies under certain conditions; stating legislative intent; requiring certain report; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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 698.3 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are authorized to establish and maintain the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) for Teacher Preparation, an incentive scholarship program to encourage the preparation of teachers, including minority teachers, in critical shortage areas for the public schools at one or more of the Oklahoma public or private higher education institutions. Priority consideration shall be given to prospective teachers from underrepresented minority groups and prospective teachers who meet the same requirements as set forth in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. A prospective teacher, whether planning to pursue an undergraduate teacher education program or to become qualified to teach after earning a bachelor's degree in a critical shortage area, shall be considered if the prospective teacher:

1. Has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale at the end of the sophomore year from an institution of higher education; and

2. Is classified as entering the first term of the prospective teacher's junior year.

B. To the extent that funds are available, scholarships at public institutions of higher education shall cover general enrollment fees and other fees and provide a book allowance. Scholarships to private colleges shall cover general enrollment fees and other fees and include a book allowance but shall not exceed Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) per academic year.

C. It is the intent of the Oklahoma Legislature that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education create a committee composed of educators, teacher educators from the participating institutions, other professionals from the critical shortage area fields, and representatives of the public schools and the State Department of Education to recommend to the State Regents the following:

1. Further criteria for the selection of participants;
2. Procedures for admission;
3. Procedures and instruments for assessing the effectiveness of the Program; and

4. Any other criteria or procedures deemed necessary by the State Regents.

The committee shall prepare and deliver a report on the Program to the Legislature on or before July 1 of each year.

D. Each participant, prior to entry into the Program, shall have agreed to teach in critical shortage areas in the public schools of this state consecutively for a minimum of three (3) years upon graduation and licensure as a teacher. Any participant failing to maintain a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, changing to an inappropriate area of study, withdrawing or otherwise leaving

school, or failing to meet requirements for licensure and certification to teach as established by law shall be subject to disqualification from the Program.

E. Students who are unable to meet the teaching obligation or who are subject to disqualification from the Program pursuant to subsection D of this section shall be liable for all scholarship funds that have been disbursed for which no service has been rendered pursuant to subsection D of this section. The scholarship amount shall be considered to be a loan, with interest applied at the rate established by the State Regents but no higher than the highest interest rate on other student loans, and repayable to the State of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may provide exceptions to the provisions of this subsection in hardship situations.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1999.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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