

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 55th Legislature (2016)

HOUSE BILL 2372

By: Vaughan

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; creating the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Act; providing short title; establishing the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program; directing the State Regents for Higher Education to administer the program; setting forth benefits of the program; providing eligibility criteria; requiring execution of certain agreement; providing for agreement forms; providing for reimbursement of certain fees; allowing the State Regents for Higher Education to waive certain requirements; providing for tuition reimbursement upon meeting certain criteria; providing limits for tuition reimbursements; providing for distribution; requiring certain confirmation of employment; requiring submission of certain documentation; creating the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Revolving Fund; stating source of funding; providing for use of funds; providing for payments upon warrants; directing promulgation of rules; 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 699.1 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 699.2 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. 1. There is hereby established the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall administer the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program.

2. The program shall provide assistance to students who meet the criteria set forth in subsection B of this section and who execute an agreement as set forth in subsection C of this section.

B. To be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program during the 2017-2018 school year and thereafter, a student shall:

1. Have completed the first two (2) years or equivalent number of hours to have sophomore standing and achieved a minimum grade-point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale;

2. Have passed the general education examination approved by the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability and been accepted at an accredited college of education at an institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education; and

3. Have submitted an application on a form provided by the State Regents for Higher Education and been approved by the State Regents.

C. Students who meet the criteria set forth in subsection B of this section shall execute an agreement stating that the student shall:

1. Agree to earn a degree from an accredited college of education at an institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education;

2. Take a minimum of thirty (30) hours within twelve (12) months of the date of acceptance into the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program;

3. Complete the junior and senior years of the student within twenty-four (24) months of the date of acceptance into the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program;

4. Maintain a minimum grade-point average of not less than 3.5 on a 4.0 scale through the senior year of the student;

5. Agree to obtain a standard Oklahoma teaching certificate;  
and

6. Agree to teach at an Oklahoma public school for not less than five (5) consecutive years.

D. Agreements executed as provided for in subsection C of this section shall be on forms provided by the State Regents for Higher Education who shall verify compliance with the agreements. The date upon which the agreement is executed shall be the "date of acceptance" for the purposes of this program.

E. If a participant in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program is prevented from meeting any of the requirements set forth in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Act due to factors beyond the control of the participant, the State Regents for Higher Education may temporarily waive the relevant requirements. The State Regents may rescind any award granted to a participant in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program if the participant does not maintain eligibility as set forth in this section.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 699.3 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. Subject to the availability of funds, a participant in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program shall be eligible to receive tuition reimbursement assistance awards as provided for in this section if the participant:

1. Graduates from an accredited college of education at an institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education;
2. Receives a standard certificate to teach pursuant to the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act; and
3. Executes a contract to teach at a public school district in Oklahoma.

B. An amount equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of the nonguaranteed resident tuition and generally applicable fees for which an eligible participant in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment

Program is obligated shall be awarded by allocation from the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Revolving Fund created in Section 4 of this act. Each award of tuition reimbursement assistance shall be distributed at the end of each school year during which the participant taught at an Oklahoma public school. The total number of awards shall not exceed five (5) for each participant. The amount of the tuition reimbursement shall be reduced by the amount of scholarship and grant aid the student received that could be used for the payment of tuition and applicable fees.

C. A tuition reimbursement assistance award as provided for in this section shall not be allowed for tuition and fees incurred for courses or other postsecondary units taken more than twenty-four (24) months from the date of acceptance into the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program.

D. Tuition reimbursement assistance awards granted pursuant to the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program shall be awarded to all eligible participants without any limitation on the number of awards in any year other than the amount of funds available for the program and the number of eligible applicants. If funds are not sufficient to provide awards for all eligible participants, available funds shall be distributed on a pro rata basis.

E. For the purposes of this section, the State Regents for Higher Education shall confirm the status of a participant in the

Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program by obtaining proof of employment from the contracting school district.

F. A participant in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program shall submit to the State Regents for Higher Education documentation of all scholarship and grant aid received by the participant during the junior and senior years of college of the participant.

SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 699.4 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund for the State Regents for Higher Education to be designated the "Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of all monies appropriated or transferred to the fund by the Legislature or contributions made to it by any person or entity. All monies accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to meet the obligations set forth in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Act. Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 699.5 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The State Regents for Higher Education shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Act.

SECTION 6. This act shall become effective July 1, 2016.

SECTION 7. 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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