STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 55th Legislature (2015)

SENATE BILL 288 By: Pittman

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to teachers; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-129.1, which relates to the Minority Teacher Recruitment Advisory Committee; deleting sunset date; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-130, which relates to the Minority Teacher Recruitment Center; providing additional duties for the center; providing definitions; directing the Minority Teacher Recruitment Center to award grants; establishing eligibility requirements for grants; prohibiting use of funds to supplant certain funds; directing program budgets to include certain costs; allowing institutions of higher education to use grant funds for certain expenses; allowing community organizations to expend grant funds for certain purposes; allowing a school district or school employee union to receive grant funds for certain purposes; allowing expenditure of funds for certain salary; allowing use of grant funds for certain classes; allowing use of grant funds for planning grants; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-129.1, is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-129.1. A. There is hereby ~~re-created until July 1, 2010, in accordance with the Oklahoma Sunset Law,~~ created a Minority

Teacher Recruitment Advisory Committee which shall have oversight over implementation of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Center and shall advise the operation of such Center. The Advisory Committee shall be composed of nineteen (19) members. The presence of ten Advisory Committee members or their designees shall constitute a quorum. Appointments shall be made by July 1 with members serving a term of two (2) years unless no longer eligible. The Advisory Committee members shall be appointed as follows:

1. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint:

   a. two members from the Oklahoma House of Representatives,

   b. two members from an institution of higher education in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education. One appointee shall be from a comprehensive university. One appointee shall be from a two-year college,

   c. one member who is a public school teacher who is a minority,

   d. one member who is a superintendent or designee of a public school district, and

   e. two members representing a community with a high minority population. One appointee shall be African-American. One appointee shall be Hispanic;

2. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint:

   a. two members from the Oklahoma State Senate,

b. two members from an institution of higher education in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education with a teacher preparation program. One appointee shall be from a regional university,

c. one member who is a public school teacher who is a minority,

d. one member who is a principal of a public high school, and

e. two members representing a community with a high minority population. One appointee shall be American Indian. One appointee shall be Asian-American;

3. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or a designee shall serve as a member of the Advisory Committee;

4. The Chancellor of Higher Education or a designee shall serve as a member of the Advisory Committee; and

5. The Executive Director of the ~~Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation~~ Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability or a designee shall serve as a member of the Advisory Committee.

B. Members of the Advisory Committee shall be reimbursed for attendance at the Advisory Committee meetings by the appointing agency pursuant to the State Travel Reimbursement Act or Section 456 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Members of the Advisory Committee shall designate from among the members a ~~chairperson~~ chair

and ~~vice-chairperson~~ vice chair. Staff assistance shall be provided by the Minority Teacher Recruitment Center.

C. Persons who are members on the effective date of this act shall retain their membership until their terms are completed.

D. The Minority Teacher Recruitment Advisory Committee shall:

1. Make recommendations on the annual operating budget of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Center and verify that the funds allocated to the Center through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are utilized exclusively by the Center by function;

2. Advise the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education of unmet needs within the state in the implementation of the Center's activities;

3. Annually comment publicly on the progress of the Center;

4. Assist the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in developing and reporting information about the Center when necessary;

5. Meet as often as necessary to conduct business; and

6. Keep official minutes of the Committee meetings which shall be made available to the public upon request.

E. As used in this section and Section 6-130 of this title, "minority" means a person who is a lawful resident of the State of Oklahoma and who is:

1. African-American, a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;

2. Hispanic, a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American descent;

3. Asian-American, a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands; or

4. American Indian and Alaskan Native, a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America.

SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-130, is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-130. Recognizing the future significance and challenge of educating a growing and highly diverse student population in Oklahoma common schools and acknowledging the underrepresentation of minority teachers among the state's professional education staff, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall ~~have authority to~~ establish the Minority Teacher Recruitment Center and staff and administer its work. Upon recommendations and advice from the Minority Teacher Recruitment Advisory Committee ~~re-created~~ created pursuant to Section ~~1~~ 6-129.1 of this ~~act~~ title, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby directed to work with the State Board of Education, the ~~Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation~~ Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability and other agencies, boards and education organizations in the interests of recruiting, retaining and placing minority teachers in the public schools of the

State of Oklahoma. Such efforts shall include, but not be limited to:

1. The provision and coordination of support services to teacher training programs in state institutions of higher education, including the funding of grants for campus-based recruitment, retention and placement programs that assist minority students who intend to become teachers;

2. The establishment and development of recruiting programs for potential minority teachers, including pre-collegiate curricular courses that emphasize school success and the opportunity to investigate teaching as a career choice, future teacher clubs and collegiate programs designed to recruit students making transitions from other careers and other areas of study;

3. The hosting of conferences dealing with issues that ~~effect~~ affect minority teacher recruitment, retention, and placement;

4. The creation of activities in the public and private schools of Oklahoma which enhance the image of the teaching profession; ~~and~~

5. The creation and development of placement services providing assistance to both minority educators and school districts seeking to hire qualified minority teachers;

6. Requiring each public teacher education program in this state to prepare a plan with specific goals, strategies, and deadlines for the recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation of minority teachers;

7. The provision and coordination of mentoring and induction programs in school districts for minority teachers, particularly for school districts in which at least thirty-five percent (35%) of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches and for teaching positions such as special education, bilingual education, mathematics or science that have been identified as a critical need by the local school board. These programs shall include culturally relevant teaching strategies for new teachers;

8. The establishment and administration of a loan forgiveness program for loans that covered any portion of tuition, books, and fees of minority teachers who complete five (5) years of service in schools that serve a substantial percentage of low-income students, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of service. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall establish standards for the approval of loan forgiveness requests and provide the necessary funds to forgive eligible educators' loans;

9. The establishment and development of financial and other additional supports to assist public school paraprofessionals in the completion of the career and development program pursuant to Section 6-127A of this title; and

10. The establishment and administration of a "Grow Your Own" grant competition to fund consortia that will carry out Grow Your Own Teacher preparation programs to recruit and prepare parents,

community leaders, and paraprofessionals to become effective teachers, as provided for in Section 3 of this act.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-131 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. As used in this section:

1. "Cohort" means a group of teacher education candidates who are enrolled in and share experiences in the same program and are linked by their desire to become teachers in hard-to-staff schools and by their need for the services and supports offered by the initiative;

2. "Community organization" means a nonprofit organization that has a demonstrated capacity to train, develop, and organize parent and community leaders into a constituency that will hold the school and school district accountable for achieving high academic standards. In addition to organizations with a geographic focus, "community organization" shall include general parent organizations, organizations of special education or bilingual education parents, and school employee unions;

3. "Developmental classes" means classes in basic skill areas, such as mathematics and language arts, that are prerequisite to but not counted towards degree requirements of a teacher preparation program;

4. "Eligible school" means a public elementary, middle or secondary school in this state that serves a substantial percentage of low-income students and that is either hard to staff or has hard-to-staff teaching positions;

5. "Hard-to-staff school" means a public elementary, middle or secondary school in this state in which at least thirty-five percent (35%) of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches;

6. "Hard-to-staff teaching position" means a teaching category, such as special education, bilingual education, mathematics or science, that has been identified as a critical need by the local school board;

7. "Parent and community leader" means an individual who has or had a child enrolled in a school or schools that meet the definition of a hard-to-staff school under this section and who has a history of active involvement in the school or who has a history of working to improve schools, including membership in a community organization; and

8. "Program" means a Grow Your Own Teacher preparation program established by a consortium pursuant to this section.

B. The Minority Teacher Recruitment Center shall award grants to qualified consortia that meet the following requirements:

1. A consortium shall be composed of at least a four-year institution of higher education with a teacher preparation program,

at least one school district or group of schools, and one or more community organizations. The consortium membership may also include a two-year institution of higher education or a school employee union;

2. The consortium shall focus on a clearly defined set of eligible schools that will participate in the program. The consortium shall articulate the steps that it will carry out in preparing teachers for its participating schools and in preparing teachers for one or more hard-to-staff teaching positions in those schools;

3. A candidate in a program must hold a high school diploma or its equivalent, must meet either the definition of "parent and community leader" or the definition of "public school paraprofessional", and does not hold a bachelor's degree;

4. The consortium shall employ effective procedures for teaching the skills and knowledge needed to prepare highly effective teachers. Professional preparation shall include ongoing direct experience in target schools and evaluation of this experience;

5. The consortium shall offer the program to cohorts of candidates on a schedule that enables the candidates to work full time while participating in the program and allows paraprofessionals to continue in their current positions. In any fiscal year in which an appropriation is made, the consortium shall guarantee that

support will be available to an admitted cohort for the cohort's education for that fiscal year; and

6. The institutions of higher education participating in the consortium shall document and agree to expand the same amount of funds in implementing the program that these institutions spend per student on similar educational programs. Grants received by the consortium shall supplement and not supplant these amounts.

C. Every program shall implement a program of forgivable loans to cover any portion of tuition, books, and fees of candidates under the Program in excess of the candidates' grants-in-aid. All students admitted to a cohort shall be eligible for a forgivable student loan. Loans shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes five (5) years of service in hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff teaching positions, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of service.

D. The Minority Teacher Recruitment Center shall award grants in such a way as to provide the required support for a cohort of candidates for any fiscal year in which an appropriation is made. Program budgets must show expenditures and needed funds for the entire period that candidates are expected to be enrolled.

E. No funds may be used to supplant the average per-capita expenditures by the institution of higher education for candidates.

F. Where necessary, program budgets shall include the costs of child care and other indirect expenses, such as transportation,

tutoring, technology, and technology support, necessary to permit candidates to maintain their class schedules. Grant funds may be used by any member of a consortium to offset such costs, and the services may be provided by the community organization or organizations, by any other member of the consortium or by independent contractors.

G. The institution of higher education may expend grant funds to cover the additional costs of offering classes in community settings and for tutoring services.

H. The community organization or organizations may receive a portion of the grant money for the expenses of recruitment, community orientation, and counseling of potential candidates; for providing space in the community; and for working with school personnel to facilitate individual work experiences and support of candidates.

I. The school district or school employee union, or both, may receive a portion of the grant money for expenses of supporting the work experiences of candidates and providing mentors for graduates.

J. One or more members of the consortium may expend funds to cover the salary of a site-based cohort coordinator.

K. Grant funds may also be expended to pay directly for required developmental or remedial classes for candidates beginning a program.

L. The Minority Teacher Recruitment Center may, if it chooses, award a small number of planning grants during any fiscal year to potential consortia.

SECTION 4. This act shall become effective July 1, 2015.

SECTION 5. 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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