

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 55th Legislature (2015)

3 SENATE BILL 709

By: Ford

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to teacher recruitment; creating the
8 Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Act; providing short
9 title; establishing the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment
10 Program; directing the State Regents for Higher
11 Education, in certain consultation, to administer the
12 program; setting forth benefits of the program;
13 providing eligibility criteria; requiring execution
14 of certain agreement; providing for agreement forms;
15 providing for reimbursement of certain fees; allowing
16 the State Regents for Higher Education and the
17 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability
18 to waive certain requirements; providing for bonus
19 amounts to be paid upon certain completion; providing
20 for tuition reimbursement upon certain criteria;
21 providing limits for tuition reimbursements;
22 providing for distribution; requiring certain
23 confirmation of employment; requiring submission of
24 certain documentation; providing for stipend amounts
to be paid upon meeting certain criteria; creating
the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Revolving Fund;
directing the State Regents for Higher Education and
the Commission for Educational Quality and
Accountability to conduct certain review and make
modifications as needed to the Oklahoma Teacher
Recruitment Program; directing promulgation of rules;
providing for codification; providing an effective
date; and declaring an emergency.

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2 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:
2 4

1 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-212 of Title 70, unless there
3 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

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

6 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
7 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-213 of Title 70, unless there
8 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

9 A. 1. There is hereby established the Oklahoma Teacher
10 Recruitment Program. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
11 Education in consultation with the Commission for Educational
12 Quality and Accountability shall administer the Oklahoma Teacher
13 Recruitment Program.

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

17 B. To be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Teacher
18 Recruitment Program during the 2016-2017 school year and thereafter,
19 a student shall:

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

23 2. Have passed the general education examination approved by
24 the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability and been

1 accepted at an accredited college of education at an institution
2 within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education;

3 3. Have submitted an application on a form established by the
4 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability and the State
5 Regents for Higher Education and be approved by the Commission and
6 the State Regents; and

7 4. Execute an agreement pursuant to subsection C of this
8 section. The date upon which the agreement is executed shall be the
9 "date of acceptance" for the purposes of this program.

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

- 13 1. a. agree to earn a degree from an accredited college of
14 education at an institution within the Oklahoma State
15 System of Higher Education,
- 16 b. take a minimum of thirty (30) hours within twelve (12)
17 months of the date of acceptance into the Oklahoma
18 Teacher Recruitment Program,
- 19 c. complete his or her junior and senior years within
20 twenty-four (24) months of the date of acceptance into
21 the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program,
- 22 d. maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0
23 scale through the student's senior year,
24

1 e. agree to obtain a standard Oklahoma teaching
2 certificate, and

3 f. agree to teach at an Oklahoma public school for five
4 (5) consecutive years.

5 2. Agreements shall be executed on forms provided by the State
6 Regents for Higher Education and the Commission for Educational
7 Quality and Accountability, who shall verify compliance with the
8 agreements.

9 D. Subject to the availability of funds, students who meet the
10 criteria established in subsection B and execute an agreement
11 pursuant to subsection C shall be reimbursed an amount equal to the
12 amount of fees for teacher certification assessments approved by the
13 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability.

14 E. If factors beyond the control of the Oklahoma Teacher
15 Recruitment Program participant prevent the participant from meeting
16 any of the requirements set forth in this act, the State Regents for
17 Higher Education in consultation with the Commission for Educational
18 Quality and Accountability may temporarily waive the relevant
19 requirements. The State Regents and the Commission may rescind any
20 award granted to an Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program participant
21 if he or she does not maintain eligibility as set forth in this
22 section.

1 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-214 of Title 70, unless there
3 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. Subject to the availability of funds, an Oklahoma Teacher
5 Recruitment Program participant who graduates from an accredited
6 college of education at an institution within the Oklahoma State
7 System of Higher Education, receives a standard certificate to teach
8 pursuant to the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act and has entered
9 into a contract with an Oklahoma public school shall be eligible to
10 receive a completion bonus in the amount of Four Thousand Dollars
11 (\$4,000.00), if the participant received a bachelor's degree in
12 science education, math education or special education.

13 B. Subject to the availability of funds, an Oklahoma Teacher
14 Recruitment Program participant who graduates from an accredited
15 college of education at an institution within the Oklahoma State
16 System of Higher Education and receives a certificate to teach
17 pursuant to the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall be eligible
18 to receive a completion bonus in the amount of Two Thousand Five
19 Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00), if the participant received a
20 bachelor's degree in an area not listed in subsection A of this
21 section.

22 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
23 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-215 of Title 70, unless there
24 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1 A. Subject to the availability of funds, an Oklahoma Teacher
2 Recruitment Program participant who:

3 1. Graduates from an accredited college of education at an
4 institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education;

5 2. Receives a standard certificate to teach pursuant to the
6 Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act; and

7 3. Executes a contract to teach at a public school district in
8 Oklahoma, shall be eligible to receive tuition reimbursement
9 assistance.

10 B. An amount equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of the
11 nonguaranteed resident tuition and generally applicable fees for
12 which an eligible Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program participant
13 is obligated shall be awarded by allocation from the Oklahoma
14 Teacher Recruitment Revolving Fund created in Section 6 of this act.
15 Each award of tuition reimbursement assistance shall be distributed
16 at the end of a school year during which the participant taught at
17 an Oklahoma public school, not to exceed five (5) years. The amount
18 of the tuition reimbursement shall be reduced by the amount of
19 scholarship and grant aid the student received that could be used
20 for the payment of tuition and applicable fees.

21 C. A tuition reimbursement assistance award allowed by this
22 section shall not be allowed for tuition and fees incurred for
23 courses or other postsecondary units taken more than twenty-four
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1 (24) months from the date of acceptance to the Oklahoma Teacher
2 Recruitment Program.

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

10 E. For the purposes of this section, the State Regents for
11 Higher Education and the Commission for Educational Quality and
12 Accountability shall confirm the status of an Oklahoma Teacher
13 Recruitment Program participant by obtaining proof of employment
14 from the contracting school district.

15 F. An Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program participant shall
16 submit to the State Regents for Higher Education documentation of
17 scholarship and grand aid received during the participant's junior
18 and senior years of college.

19 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
20 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-216 of Title 70, unless there
21 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

22 A. Subject to the availability of funds, an Oklahoma Teacher
23 Recruitment Program participant who:
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1 1. Graduates from an accredited college of education at an
2 institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education;

3 2. Receives a standard certificate to teach pursuant to the
4 Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act; and

5 3. Executes a contract to teach at a public school district in
6 Oklahoma, shall be eligible to receive an annual salary stipend in
7 the amount of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00), if the participant
8 received a bachelor's degree in science education, math education or
9 special education and sixty percent (60%) of his or her classroom
10 activity is spent in the degree area.

11 B. Subject to the availability of funds, an Oklahoma Teacher
12 Recruitment Program participant who:

13 1. Graduates from an accredited college of education at an
14 institution within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education;

15 2. Receives a certificate to teach pursuant to the Oklahoma
16 Teacher Preparation Act; and

17 3. Executes a contract to teach at a public school district in
18 Oklahoma, shall be eligible to receive an annual salary stipend in
19 the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00), if the
20 participant received a bachelor's degree in an area not listed in
21 subsection A of this section.

22 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
23 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-217 of Title 70, unless there
24 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

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

14 SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
15 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-218 of Title 70, unless there
16 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

17 A. Following the completion of the educator supply-and-demand
18 study every three (3) years pursuant to Section 6-211 of Title 70 of
19 the Oklahoma Statutes, the State Regents for Higher Education and
20 the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability shall
21 review the teaching areas identified as "critical need." If the
22 teaching areas are different than those outlined in paragraph 3 of
23 subsection A of Section 5 of this act, the State Regents and the
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1 Commission may modify the bachelor degrees eligible for an annual
2 salary stipend of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00).

3 B. Any change to the list of bachelor degrees eligible for an
4 annual salary stipend of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) shall go
5 into effect the following school year and shall not apply to anyone
6 who had been selected to receive the annual salary stipend of Four
7 Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) prior to the change.

8 SECTION 8. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-219 of Title 70, unless there
10 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11 The State Regents for Higher Education and the Commission for
12 Educational Quality and Accountability shall develop and administer
13 professional development, support, mentorship, and coaching programs
14 for Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Program participants consistent
15 with the provisions of Section 6-195 of this title.

16 SECTION 9. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
17 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-220 of Title 70, unless there
18 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

19 The State Regents for Higher Education and the Commission for
20 Educational Quality and Accountability shall promulgate rules to
21 implement the provisions of this act.

22 SECTION 10. This act shall become effective July 1, 2015.

23 SECTION 11. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
24 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby

1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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