

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

SENATE BILL 819

By: Dahm

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to charter schools; creating the Professional Teacher Charter Act; providing short title; providing purpose; defining terms; establishing eligibility to sponsor a professional teacher charter school; requiring filing of certain bond or letter of credit; allowing conversion of certain charter school; providing application process; allowing the State Board of Education to disapprove applications for certain reasons; requiring the Board to approve certain applications within certain time period; creating certain cause of action; allowing award of certain costs and fees; providing for governance of professional teacher charter school; providing for term of charter contract; providing eligibility to assume the terms of a charter contract; establishing powers and duties of a professional teacher charter school; prohibiting a professional teacher charter school from being subject to certain provisions; establishing boundaries of a professional teacher charter school; providing for student enrollment; creating the Professional Teacher Charter Student Revolving Fund; specifying source of fund; providing for expenditures; providing purpose of fund; providing for distribution of funds to certain schools; providing for retention or distribution of certain property; providing for calculation of weighted average daily membership and State Aid for a professional teacher charter school; prohibiting certain school from receiving certain funds; directing the State Board of Education to determine certain policy; requiring use of certain system to report transactions; providing for promulgation of rules; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 3-138, which relates to unlawful reprisal against certain

1 employees; adding reference to certain charter
2 school; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 3-144, which
3 relates to the Charter Schools Incentive Fund;
4 allowing use of fund for certain purpose; providing
5 for codification; providing an effective date; and
6 declaring an emergency.

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

8 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146 of Title 70, unless there
10 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11 A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
12 "Professional Teacher Charter Act".

13 B. The purpose of the Professional Teacher Charter Act is to
14 provide for the establishment of professional teacher charter
15 schools to:

- 16 1. Improve student learning;
- 17 2. Increase learning opportunities for students;
- 18 3. Allow experienced public school teachers to establish
19 themselves as independent education practitioners;
- 20 4. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching
21 methods;
- 22 5. Provide additional academic choices for parents and
23 students;
- 24 6. Increase parental knowledge and control of student
25 curriculum;

1 7. Reduce administrative interference in classroom teaching;

2 and

3 8. Increase transparency of student performance outcomes.

4 C. For the purposes of this act:

5 1. "Certified teacher" means a teacher who has been issued a
6 certificate by the State Board of Education in accordance with the
7 Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act and rules of the Board;

8 2. "Charter school" means a public school established by
9 contract pursuant to this act to provide learning that will improve
10 student achievement and as defined in the Elementary and Secondary
11 Education Act of 1965, (ESEA) as reauthorized by P.L. No. 114-95,
12 also known as the Every Student Succeeds Act; and

13 3. "Parent" means the natural or adoptive parent or legal
14 guardian of a minor child.

15 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
16 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146.1 of Title 70, unless
17 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

18 A. A certified teacher who has five (5) years of teaching
19 experience or a consortium of certified teachers who each have five
20 (5) years of teaching experience may sponsor a professional teacher
21 charter school pursuant to the provisions of this act.

22 B. A certified teacher or consortium of certified teachers
23 shall file with the State Board of Education a surety bond or letter
24 of credit in an amount equal to Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) per

1 student expected to enroll in the professional teacher charter
2 school. The surety bond or letter of credit amount may be adjusted
3 based on actual enrollment of students in the professional teacher
4 charter school as of August 1. In no case shall the amount of
5 surety bond or letter of credit be less than Twenty-five Thousand
6 Dollars (\$25,000.00).

7 C. A charter school established pursuant to the Oklahoma
8 Charter Schools Act may convert to a professional teacher charter
9 school subject to the provisions of this act.

10 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
11 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146.2 of Title 70, unless
12 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

13 A. A certified teacher or consortium of certified teachers
14 seeking to establish a professional teacher charter school pursuant
15 to this act shall submit a written application to the State Board of
16 Education. The Board shall make the application available on its
17 website, and applications may be submitted online. The Board shall
18 not charge an application fee. The application shall include:

19 1. The name of the applicant(s) accompanied by copies of
20 certificates to teach issued by the Board and proof that the
21 applicant(s) has five (5) years of teaching experience in this
22 state;

23 2. Proof of filing the surety bond or letter of credit required
24 by Section 2 of this act; and

1 3. The designated point of contact between the professional
2 teacher charter school and the State Board of Education.

3 B. 1. The State Board of Education may disapprove an
4 application that does not meet one or more of the requirements set
5 forth in this section or Section 4 of this act.

6 2. The State Board of Education shall approve an application
7 that meets the requirements of this section and Section 4 of this
8 act within thirty (30) days of receipt of the application and grant
9 the applicant a charter contract. If an application that meets the
10 requirements of this section and Section 4 of this act is not
11 approved within thirty (30) days of receipt, the applicant(s) shall
12 have a cause of action in district court. The court may award costs
13 and reasonable attorney fees to the prevailing party.

14 C. A professional teacher charter school established pursuant
15 to the provisions of this act may be organized as a sole
16 proprietorship or any other business entity authorized to do
17 business in this state.

18 D. A professional teacher charter school shall be governed by
19 the certified teacher or consortium of certified teachers who
20 applied for the school pursuant to this section and shall have
21 exclusive control over curriculum selection, development, and
22 delivery. Provided, however, a professional teacher charter school
23 may have a non-teacher advisory board.

1 E. A professional teacher charter school contract shall be a
2 continuing contract.

3 F. If a certified teacher or consortium of certified teachers
4 granted a professional teacher charter school contract pursuant to
5 the provisions of this section is no longer willing or able to
6 operate the charter school, another certified teacher or consortium
7 of teachers who meets the requirements of subsection A of Section 2
8 of this act may apply to the State Board of Education to assume the
9 terms of the charter contract. The State Board of Education shall
10 approve the transfer of the charter contract if the application
11 meets the requirements of this section and Section 4 of this act.

12 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
13 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146.3 of Title 70, unless
14 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

15 A. A professional teacher charter school established pursuant
16 to this act:

17 1. May provide a comprehensive program of instruction for
18 prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any grade between grades one and
19 twelve;

20 2. Shall ensure that each enrolled student takes a nationally
21 norm-referenced test approved by the State Board of Education once
22 each school year. Individual student test results shall be
23 delivered to the student's parents along with aggregated charter
24 school results. Aggregate test data shall be remitted to the State

1 Department of Education and published on the professional teacher
2 charter school's website;

3 3. Shall post on its website a statement describing the extent
4 to which the charter school's curriculum complies with or departs
5 from the subject matter standards adopted by the State Board of
6 Education pursuant to Section 11-103.6 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma
7 Statutes;

8 4. Shall post on its website information regarding curriculum
9 and instructional materials to be used by charter school students
10 and teachers;

11 5. Shall adopt bylaws that:

12 a. ensure compliance with all federal regulations and
13 state and local rules and statutes relating to health,
14 safety, civil rights, and insurance, and

15 b. require that the charter school be as equally free and
16 open to all students as traditional public schools;

17 6. Shall have independent control over curriculum and personnel
18 decisions;

19 7. May enter into contracts, sue, and be sued; and

20 8. Shall not levy taxes or issue bonds.

21 B. A professional teacher charter school established pursuant
22 to this act shall not be subject to any provision of the Oklahoma
23 Charter Schools Act except as provided for in this act. A
24 professional teacher charter school shall not:

1 1. Be required to participate in the testing required by the
2 Oklahoma School Testing Program Act; however, the charter school may
3 choose to participate;

4 2. Be required to participate in the accountability system
5 established pursuant to Section 1210.545 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma
6 Statutes; however, the charter school may choose to participate;

7 3. Be required to employ persons who have a valid certificate
8 issued by and in accordance with the rules of the State Board of
9 Education;

10 4. Be required to comply with the minimum salary and benefits
11 set forth in Section 18-114.14 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

12 5. Be required to comply with employer-employee bargaining
13 provisions set forth in Sections 509.1 through 509.10 of Title 70 of
14 the Oklahoma Statutes; and

15 6. Be required to comply with provisions regarding the length
16 of the school day as provided for in Section 1-111 of Title 70 of
17 the Oklahoma Statutes or the length of the school year as provided
18 for in Section 1-109 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

19 C. 1. A professional teacher charter school established
20 pursuant to this act shall be a statewide charter school, and the
21 geographic boundaries of each professional teacher charter school
22 shall be the borders of the state.

23 2. Any student between the ages of five (5) on or before
24 September 1 and twenty-one (21) years on or before September 1 shall

1 be eligible to submit an enrollment application to a professional
2 teacher charter school.

3 3. A professional teacher charter school shall not limit
4 enrollment or discriminate based on race, sex, or religion.

5 4. The State Board of Education shall not restrict the number
6 of students a professional teacher charter school may enroll.

7 5. A professional teacher charter school may establish
8 enrollment criteria based on objective academic standards and
9 educational emphasis.

10 6. By July 1 each year, a professional teacher charter school
11 shall determine and post on its website the capacity for each grade
12 level offered by the school. If capacity is insufficient to enroll
13 all eligible students, the school shall select students through a
14 lottery selection process.

15 D. A professional teacher charter school may provide student
16 transportation.

17 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
18 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146.4 of Title 70, unless
19 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

20 A. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving
21 fund for the State Department of Education to be designated the
22 "Professional Teacher Charter Student Revolving Fund". The fund
23 shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations,
24 and shall consist of all monies received by the State Department of

1 Education from the surety bond or irrevocable letter of credit
2 required by subsection B of Section 2 of this act. All monies
3 accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may
4 be budgeted and expended by the State Department of Education for
5 the purpose set forth in subsection B of this section. Expenditures
6 from the fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State
7 Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the
8 Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for
9 approval and payment.

10 B. 1. In the event that a professional teacher charter school
11 established pursuant to the Professional Teacher Charter Act created
12 in Section 1 of this act permanently ceases operations prior to the
13 end of a school year, the surety bond or irrevocable letter of
14 credit required by subsection B of Section 2 of this act shall be
15 paid to the Professional Teacher Charter Student Revolving Fund
16 created in subsection A of this section. The State Department of
17 Education shall distribute the funds on a pro-rata basis to the
18 school districts or public charter schools established pursuant to
19 the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act in which students who had been
20 attending a professional teacher charter school enroll.

21 2. a. If a professional teacher charter school is
22 established as a non-profit sole proprietorship or
23 other business entity pursuant to subsection C of
24 Section 3 of this act and permanently ceases

1 operations, any real or personal property purchased by
2 the charter school with public funds shall be retained
3 by the State Board of Education for distribution to
4 the school districts or public charter schools
5 established pursuant to the Oklahoma Charter Schools
6 Act in which students who had been attending a
7 professional teacher charter school enroll. Priority
8 shall be given to public charter schools in which
9 students who had been attending a professional teacher
10 charter school enroll.

11 b. If a professional teacher charter school is
12 established as a for-profit sole proprietorship or
13 other business entity pursuant to subsection C of
14 Section 3 of this act and permanently ceases
15 operations, any real or personal property purchased by
16 the charter school with public funds shall be retained
17 by the sole proprietorship or other business entity.

18 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
19 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146.5 of Title 70, unless
20 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

21 A. For the purpose of calculating weighted average daily
22 membership pursuant to Section 18-201.1 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma
23 Statutes and State Aid pursuant to Section 18-200.1 of Title 70 of
24 the Oklahoma Statutes, the weighted average daily membership for the

1 first year of operation of a professional teacher charter school
2 established pursuant to the provisions of this act shall be
3 determined by multiplying the actual enrollment of students as of
4 August 1 by 1.333. The professional teacher charter school shall
5 receive revenue equal to that which would be generated by the
6 estimated weighted average daily membership calculated pursuant to
7 this paragraph. At midyear, the allocation for the professional
8 teacher charter school shall be adjusted using the first quarter
9 weighted average daily membership for the professional teacher
10 charter school calculated pursuant to Section 18-201.1 of Title 70
11 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

12 B. A professional teacher charter school shall not be eligible
13 to receive state-dedicated, local, or county revenue; provided, a
14 professional teacher charter school may be eligible to receive any
15 other aid, grants, or revenues allowed to other schools. A
16 professional teacher charter school shall be considered a local
17 education agency for purposes of funding.

18 C. The State Board of Education shall determine the policy and
19 procedure for making payments to a professional teacher charter
20 school.

21 D. A professional teacher charter school shall use the Oklahoma
22 Cost Accounting System to report financial transactions to the State
23 Board of Education.

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1 E. Any unexpended funds received by a professional teacher
2 charter school may be reserved and used for future purposes.

3 SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-146.6 of Title 70, unless
5 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules to implement
7 the provisions of this act and to expedite the creation and
8 maintenance of professional teacher charter schools.

9 SECTION 8. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 3-138, is
10 amended to read as follows:

11 Section 3-138. A board of education of a school district or an
12 employee of the district who has control over personnel actions
13 shall not take unlawful reprisal action against an employee of the
14 school district for the reason that the employee is directly or
15 indirectly involved in an application to establish a charter school
16 pursuant to the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act or the Professional
17 Teacher Charter Act created in Section 1 of this act. As used in
18 this section, "unlawful reprisal" means an action that is taken by a
19 board of education or a school district employee as a direct result
20 of a lawful application to establish a charter school pursuant to
21 the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act or the Professional Teacher Charter
22 Act created in Section 1 of this act and that is adverse to an
23 employee or an education program.

1 SECTION 9. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 3-144, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 Section 3-144. A. There is hereby created in the State
4 Treasury a fund to be designated the "Charter Schools Incentive
5 Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal
6 year limitations, and shall consist of all monies appropriated by
7 the Legislature, gifts, grants, devises, and donations from any
8 public or private source. The State Department of Education shall
9 administer the fund for the purpose of providing financial support
10 to charter school applicants and charter schools established
11 pursuant to the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act or the Professional
12 Teacher Charter Act created pursuant to Section 1 of this act for
13 start-up costs and costs associated with renovating or remodeling
14 existing buildings and structures for use by a charter school. The
15 State Department of Education is authorized to allocate funds on a
16 per-pupil basis for purposes of providing matching funds for the
17 federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program
18 created pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, 20 USCA, Section
19 7221d.

20 B. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to implement
21 the provisions of this section, including application and
22 notification requirements.

23 SECTION 10. This act shall become effective July 1, 2023.
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1 SECTION 11. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
2 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
3 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
4 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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