

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

4 FOR

5 SENATE BILL 710

By: Seifried

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7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

8 An Act relating to teacher preparation; amending
9 Section 1, Chapter 400, O.S.L. 2025 (70 O.S. Supp.
10 2025, Section 6-186.1), which relates to
11 establishment of TeachForwardOK; allowing the
12 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability
13 to select more than one applicant to receive certain
14 monetary award if funds are sufficient; updating
15 statutory references; updating statutory language;
16 and declaring an emergency.

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

18 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 1, Chapter 400, O.S.L.
19 2025 (70 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 6-186.1), is amended to read as
20 follows:

21 Section 6-186.1. A. The Commission for Educational Quality and
22 Accountability shall establish and maintain a two-year pilot program
23 to be known as TeachForwardOK to provide new, high-quality pathways
24 to enter the teaching profession and increase the number of teachers
in this state's workforce.

1 B. Within thirty (30) days of ~~the effective date of this act~~
2 August 29, 2025, the Commission shall issue a request for proposals
3 to select technical assistance providers to evaluate teacher
4 education programs in institutions of higher education within The
5 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education that are accredited by the
6 Commission pursuant to Section 6-186 of ~~Title 70 of the Oklahoma~~
7 ~~Statutes~~ this title.

8 C. To participate in TeachForwardOK, a teacher education
9 program shall submit an application to the Commission in the manner
10 and on a form prescribed by the Commission. The Commission shall
11 establish criteria to approve applicants. Subject to the
12 availability of funds, the Commission shall award grants to approved
13 applicant teacher education programs. The Commission may use any
14 gifts, grants, devises, and donations from any public or private
15 source and monies appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of
16 implementing the provisions of this section. Grants shall be used
17 as incentives to participate and to contract with a technical
18 assistance provider selected by the Commission pursuant to
19 subsection B of this section. The provider shall evaluate, at a
20 minimum, the following:

- 21 1. Teacher candidate recruitment and completion;
- 22 2. Whether the teacher education program prepares teacher
- 23 candidates effectively;

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1 3. Whether the teacher education program meets workforce needs
2 in this state; and

3 4. Innovative ways to recruit nontraditional teacher candidates
4 unique to the teacher education program.

5 D. 1. Evaluation reports prepared by a technical assistance
6 provider shall be electronically submitted to the approved applicant
7 teacher education program and the Commission.

8 2. Within ninety (90) days of receiving the report, the teacher
9 education program shall electronically submit a report response to
10 the Commission detailing how the teacher education program plans to
11 address the evaluation report's findings. The report response shall
12 prioritize innovative approaches to provide new, high-quality
13 pathways to enter the teaching profession and increase the number of
14 teachers in this state's workforce including, but not limited to:

15 a. developing a system for recruiting eligible teacher
16 candidates, such as:

17 (1) a pathway for high school students to become
18 paraprofessionals,

19 (2) a pathway for paraprofessionals to become
20 teachers, and

21 (3) a pathway for individuals with bachelor's degrees
22 to become teachers,

23 b. developing a curriculum that includes intensive on-
24 the-job training for teacher candidates,

- 1 c. identifying a mastery-based evaluation system to
2 determine when eligible teacher candidates have
3 mastered the skills and competencies necessary for
4 graduation from an apprenticeship program and
5 outlining benchmarks that teacher candidates must meet
6 as they progress through on-the-job training,
- 7 d. offering a schedule that enables teacher candidates to
8 work ~~full-time~~ full-time in a public school district
9 while participating in an apprenticeship program and
10 allowing paraprofessionals to continue in their
11 positions, or
- 12 e. providing a flexible schedule for paraprofessionals
13 participating in an apprenticeship program to support
14 their success in the program that will facilitate
15 course completion and on-the-job training.

16 E. Subject to the availability of funding, the Commission shall
17 review the report responses submitted pursuant to subsection D of
18 this section and select one approved applicant teacher education
19 program to receive Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) to
20 enact the initiatives outlined in the program's report response. If
21 funds are sufficient, the Commission may select more than one
22 approved applicant teacher education program to receive a monetary
23 award based on the report response submitted pursuant to subsection
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1 D of this section to enact the initiatives outlined in the report
2 response.

3 F. By December 31, 2027, the Commission shall electronically
4 submit a report of TeachForwardOK's findings and recommendations to
5 the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the
6 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

7 G. The Commission shall promulgate rules to implement the
8 provisions of this section.

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

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