

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 March 3, 2026

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
4 FOR

5 SENATE BILL NO. 710

6 By: Seifried

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

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

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

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

25 B. Within thirty (30) days of ~~the effective date of this act~~  
26 August 29, 2025, the Commission shall issue a request for proposals

1 to select technical assistance providers to evaluate teacher  
2 education programs in institutions of higher education within The  
3 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education that are accredited by the  
4 Commission pursuant to Section 6-186 of ~~Title 70 of the Oklahoma~~  
5 ~~Statutes~~ this title.

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

- 19 1. Teacher candidate recruitment and completion;
- 20 2. Whether the teacher education program prepares teacher  
21 candidates effectively;
- 22 3. Whether the teacher education program meets workforce needs  
23 in this state; and

24

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

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

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

13 a. developing a system for recruiting eligible teacher  
14 candidates, such as:

15 (1) a pathway for high school students to become  
16 paraprofessionals,

17 (2) a pathway for paraprofessionals to become  
18 teachers, and

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

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

23 c. identifying a mastery-based evaluation system to  
24 determine when eligible teacher candidates have

1           mastered the skills and competencies necessary for  
2           graduation from an apprenticeship program and  
3           outlining benchmarks that teacher candidates must meet  
4           as they progress through on-the-job training,

5           d.   offering a schedule that enables teacher candidates to  
6           work ~~full-time~~ full-time in a public school district  
7           while participating in an apprenticeship program and  
8           allowing paraprofessionals to continue in their  
9           positions, or

10          e.   providing a flexible schedule for paraprofessionals  
11          participating in an apprenticeship program to support  
12          their success in the program that will facilitate  
13          course completion and on-the-job training.

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

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

5 G. The Commission shall promulgate rules to implement the  
6 provisions of this section.

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

11 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
12 March 3, 2026 - DO PASS AS AMENDED BY CS

13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24