

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

3 SENATE BILL 1342

By: Seifried

4
5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; creating the
8 Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy to be
9 administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
10 Education; providing purpose; defining term;
11 directing the State Department of Education to
12 identify and publish certain list by certain date;
13 providing eligibility criteria; requiring execution
14 of certain agreement; directing assistance amount to
15 be equivalent to certain tuition and fees;
16 prohibiting assistance for certain courses or units;
17 directing assistance to be allocated to certain
18 institution of higher education; directing certain
19 benefits to be exhausted first; providing for
20 eligibility retention; requiring repayment of
21 assistance for failure to meet certain agreement;
22 providing for calculation of repayment amount;
23 allowing request for hardship waiver; requiring
24 certain institutions of higher education to develop
25 and promote, in certain coordination, certain public
26 awareness program; directing the State Regents to
27 submit certain report by certain date; providing for
28 contents of report; providing for promulgation of
29 rules; creating the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment
30 Academy Revolving Fund; specifying source of fund;
31 providing for expenditures; providing purpose of
32 fund; providing for codification; providing an
33 effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

1 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-400 of Title 70, unless there
3 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. 1. There is hereby created the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment
5 Academy to be administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
6 Education to provide tuition and mandatory fee assistance to
7 individuals to earn a bachelor's degree from a teacher preparation
8 program accredited by the Commission for Educational Quality and
9 Accountability and commit to teach in one of the critical shortage
10 subject areas identified pursuant to paragraph 2 of this subsection
11 in a public school in this state.

12 2. For the purposes of this section, "critical shortage subject
13 area" means a subject area identified by the State Department of
14 Education that is in critical need of certified teachers. By July
15 30, 2024, and by July 30 every three (3) years thereafter, the State
16 Department of Education shall identify and publish on its website a
17 list of the top five (5) critical shortage subject areas taking into
18 consideration the results of the educator supply-and-demand study
19 conducted pursuant to Section 6-211 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma
20 Statutes. The eligibility of an individual who has executed an
21 agreement pursuant to subsection C of this section shall not be
22 affected by the removal of a subject area from the Department's list
23 of top five (5) critical shortage subject areas.

1 B. To be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Teacher
2 Recruitment Academy during the 2024-2025 academic year and
3 thereafter, an individual shall:

4 1. Enroll in an institution of higher education within The
5 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education. An individual may enroll
6 first in a two-year institution and subsequently transfer to a four-
7 year institution to complete the requirements for a degree from an
8 approved teacher preparation program;

9 2. Submit an application on a form prescribed by the Oklahoma
10 State Regents for Higher Education; and

11 3. Execute an agreement pursuant to subsection C of this
12 section.

13 C. An individual who meets the eligibility criteria set forth
14 in subsection B of this section shall execute an agreement stating
15 that he or she shall:

16 1. Agree to earn a bachelor's degree from an approved teacher
17 preparation degree program leading to a standard teaching
18 certificate;

19 2. Agree to meet the requirements of Section 6-187 of Title 70
20 of the Oklahoma Statutes to earn a standard teaching certificate in
21 a critical shortage subject area identified pursuant to subsection A
22 of this section; and

23 3. Agree to teach in a public school in this state in a
24 critical shortage subject area identified pursuant to subsection A

1 of this section. The individual shall be required to teach for one
2 school year in a public school for each academic year the individual
3 received tuition and mandatory fee assistance pursuant to this
4 section.

5 D. 1. The amount of assistance shall be equivalent to the
6 amount of tuition and mandatory fees for courses in which the
7 individual enrolls for completion of a bachelor's degree.
8 Assistance shall not be allowed for courses or other postsecondary
9 units taken in excess of the requirements for completion of a
10 bachelor's degree or taken more than five (5) years after the
11 individual's first semester of enrollment in an institution of
12 higher education within The Oklahoma State System of Higher
13 Education.

14 2. Assistance provided pursuant to this subsection shall be
15 allocated to the institution of higher education from the Oklahoma
16 Teacher Recruitment Academy Revolving Fund created pursuant to
17 Section 2 of this act.

18 3. An eligible student seeking tuition and fee assistance
19 pursuant to this section who is eligible for federal education
20 benefits or Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act benefits shall
21 exhaust all such available benefits first.

22 E. To retain eligibility for the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment
23 Academy, an individual shall:

1 1. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic
2 progress while enrolled in an institution of higher education
3 according to the institution's standards; and

4 2. After earning a bachelor's degree, submit annual proof of
5 employment with a public school in this state teaching in a critical
6 shortage subject area identified pursuant to subsection A of this
7 section. The proof shall be provided for a number of school years
8 equal to the number of academic years for which the individual
9 received tuition and mandatory fee assistance pursuant to this
10 section. The individual shall not be required to teach at the same
11 school for the number of school years required by this paragraph.

12 F. An individual who has received Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment
13 Academy assistance pursuant to this section and who fails to comply
14 with the agreement executed pursuant to subsection C of this section
15 shall be required to repay an amount to be calculated as follows:

16 1. Determine the total amount of assistance provided pursuant
17 to the provisions of this section;

18 2. Divide the amount determined in paragraph 1 of this
19 subsection by twelve (12); and

20 3. Multiply the amount determined in paragraph 2 of this
21 subsection by the number of months the individual did not fulfill
22 the requirements of the agreement executed pursuant to subsection C
23 of this section. Repayments shall be deposited into the Oklahoma
24

1 Teacher Recruitment Academy Revolving Fund created pursuant to
2 Section 2 of this act.

3 G. An individual who has received Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment
4 Academy assistance pursuant to this section and who fails to comply
5 with the agreement executed pursuant to subsection C of this section
6 due to hardship circumstances may request a waiver from repayment
7 from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

8 H. An institution of higher education within The Oklahoma State
9 System of Higher Education that has enrolled students participating
10 in the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy shall develop and
11 promote, in coordination with surrounding public school districts, a
12 public awareness program to make students and parents aware of the
13 Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy.

14 I. On or before July 30, 2025, and each year thereafter, the
15 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall submit a report to
16 the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker
17 of the House of Representatives, and the chairs of the committees
18 with responsibility over higher education in both houses of the
19 Legislature. The report shall include the following information:

20 1. The number of Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy
21 participants enrolled in each institution of higher education by
22 year of enrollment;

23 2. The number of Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy
24 participants who graduate with a bachelor's degree from an approved

1 teacher preparation program and the critical shortage subject area
2 in which they are teaching in a public school in this state; and

3 3. The number of Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy
4 participants who fail to comply with the agreement executed pursuant
5 to subsection C of this section.

6 J. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may
7 promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section.

8 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-401 of Title 70, unless there
10 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund
12 for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to be designated
13 the "Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy Revolving Fund". The fund
14 shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations,
15 and shall consist of all monies received by the State Regents from
16 legislative appropriations provided for the purpose of implementing
17 the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Academy created in Section 1 of
18 this act. All monies accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby
19 appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the State Regents
20 for the purpose provided for in this act. Expenditures from the
21 fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer
22 against claims filed as prescribed by law with the Director of the
23 Office of Management and Enterprise Services for approval and
24 payment.

1 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2024.

2 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
3 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
4 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
5 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.
6

7 59-2-2598 EB 12/14/2023 4:41:41 PM
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25