

# An Act

ENROLLED HOUSE  
BILL NO. 2559

By: McBride, Baker, Waldron,  
Fugate, Dollens, Davis,  
West (Tammy), and Schreiber  
of the House

and

Pemberton of the Senate

An Act relating to teacher scholarships; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 698.1, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 344, O.S.L. 2022 (70 O.S. Supp. 2022, Section 698.1), which relates to the Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship and Employment Incentive Program; renaming program to Inspired to Teach Program; including eligibility for certain students; defining term; specifying grade point average requirement; and providing an effective date.

SUBJECT: Teacher scholarships

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 698.1, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 344, O.S.L. 2022 (70 O.S. Supp. 2022, Section 698.1), is amended to read as follows:

Section 698.1 A. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall establish and maintain an incentive scholarship program and teacher employment incentive program, as funding is available, to encourage the preparation of public school teachers for prekindergarten through twelfth grade, including minority teachers, at all state public higher education institutions or private higher education institutions accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of this title and incentivize employment as public teachers for prekindergarten through twelfth grade in the state for at least five (5) years, to be known as the ~~Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship~~

~~and Employment Incentive~~ Inspired to Teach Program. Prospective teachers planning to pursue an undergraduate teacher education program at an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation program shall be considered if they graduated from ~~an Oklahoma~~ high school, completed high-school level instruction at home, or completed General Educational Development (GED) test requirements; meet the higher education admission standards~~;~~; and declare a pre-education major or major in an approved Oklahoma teacher preparation degree program leading to a standard teaching certificate.

B. To the extent that funds are available, scholarships, renewable for up to three (3) additional years for qualified students meeting satisfactory academic progress standards in completing a teacher preparation degree program leading to a standard teaching certificate, shall be awarded to cover costs of tuition, general enrollment fees, other fees, books, materials, and services provided by the institution, including room and board, in the following manner:

1. One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per academic year for up to three (3) academic years for full-time students who have earned less than ninety (90) credit hours; and

2. Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for the final academic year for full-time students who have earned ninety (90) or more credit hours.

The maximum amount of scholarship funds awarded as provided in this subsection to any qualified student shall not exceed Five Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$5,500.00).

C. As used in this section, "full-time student" means:

1. An undergraduate student enrolled in twelve (12) or more semester credits toward teacher education degree requirements;

2. An undergraduate student who is a teacher education major who is enrolled in or has completed an internship or student teaching credit hours in order to complete the degree program prior to certification and who has been approved to take less than twelve (12) credit hours; or

3. An undergraduate student who is a teacher education major with an approved reasonable accommodation from Student Accessibility

Services at the institution due to a documented disability and who has been approved to take less than twelve (12) credit hours.

~~B.~~ D. It is the intent of the Oklahoma Legislature that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education create a committee composed of educators, teacher educators from the participating institutions, and representatives of the public schools and the State Department of Education to provide recommendations to the State Regents to improve effectiveness of the ~~program~~ Inspired to Teach Program. The committee shall prepare and deliver a report on the program to the Legislature on or before July 1 of each year.

~~C.~~ E. Each scholarship participant, prior to entry into the ~~program~~ Inspired to Teach Program, shall have agreed to teach in an Oklahoma public prekindergarten through twelfth grade school for a minimum of five (5) consecutive years upon graduation and licensure as a teacher. Any scholarship participant failing to maintain a 2.5 grade point average throughout matriculation, changing to an ineligible area of study, failing to meet satisfactory academic progress standards, withdrawing or otherwise leaving school, or failing to meet requirements for licensure and certification to teach as established by law shall be subject to disqualification from the program.

~~D.~~ F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are authorized to make employment incentive payments pursuant to the provisions of this section to ~~program~~ Inspired to Teach Program participants who are employed as traditionally certified teachers in Oklahoma public prekindergarten through twelfth grade schools following graduation. Incentive payments may be awarded following each consecutive year of satisfactory service as documented by the employing school district, up to five (5) years of service for scholarship recipients as provided in subsection A of this section, upon graduation from an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation degree program. The maximum amount of employment incentive payments for any qualified participant shall be Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) per year for up to five (5) years, not to exceed a total of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) per participant.

~~E.~~ G. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall require the execution of appropriate contracts with eligible ~~program~~ Inspired to Teach Program participants. Participants failing to comply with the requirements of this section or failing to provide current contact information shall not be eligible for the employment incentive payments provided for in this section. The Chancellor of

the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, with the approval of the State Regents, may contract with any other appropriate organization or unit of government for the administration of the provisions of this section.

~~F.~~ H. If sufficient funds are not available for employment incentive payments to qualified participants during any fiscal year, the Chancellor may make reductions in the payments made to qualified participants.

~~G.~~ I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may, at the time an award is made on behalf of the ~~Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship and Employment Incentive~~ Inspired to Teach Program, set aside funds for the full commitment made to an eligible student.

~~H.~~ J. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may utilize ~~Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship and Employment Incentive~~ Inspired to Teach Program designated funds for administration of the program.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2023.

Passed the House of Representatives the 10th day of May, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of the House  
of Representatives

Passed the Senate the 25th day of April, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of the Senate

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

By: \_\_\_\_\_