

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
State of Oklahoma

SPEAKER:

CHAIR:

I move to amend HB1281 _____
Of the printed Bill
Page _____ Section _____ Lines _____
Of the Engrossed Bill

By deleting the content of the entire measure, and by inserting in lieu thereof the following language:

AMEND TITLE TO CONFORM TO AMENDMENTS

Adopted: _____

Amendment submitted by: Chad Caldwell _____

Reading Clerk

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 PROPOSED COMMITTEE
4 SUBSTITUTE
5 FOR
6 HOUSE BILL NO. 1281

By: Caldwell (Chad)

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8 PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

9 An Act relating to teachers; creating the Return to
10 Teach Signing Bonus Act; establishing a signing bonus
11 program for certain teachers and school counselors;
12 subjecting program to availability of funds; listing
13 requirements for program participants; providing for
14 payment of bonus; directing State Department of
15 Education to verify applicant information; requiring
16 return of bonus under certain circumstances;
17 excluding bonus from being included in certain
18 calculations; providing for promulgation of rules;
19 providing for codification; and declaring an
20 emergency.

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

22 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
23 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-451 of Title 70, unless there
24 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Return to
Teach Signing Bonus Act".

B. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and subject to the
availability of funding, the State Department of Education shall

1 establish and administer a signing bonus program for classroom
2 teachers and school counselors who return to Oklahoma public
3 schools. The Department may prioritize applicants in locations and
4 subject areas with the most need as determined by the Department.

5 C. To participate in the signing bonus program, the applicant
6 shall:

7 1. a. Be a classroom teacher with at least three (3) years
8 of prior teaching experience and a valid or expired
9 teaching certificate issued by:

10 (1) the State Board of Education,

11 (2) the education certification entity of another
12 state,

13 (3) the National Board for Professional Teaching
14 Standards, or

15 (4) the education certification entity of another
16 country, or

17 b. Be a school counselor with at least three (3) years of
18 prior experience and a valid or expired school
19 counselor certificate issued by:

20 (1) the State Board of Education,

21 (2) the education certification entity of another
22 state, or

23 (3) the education certification entity of another
24 country;

1 2. Have not been employed by an Oklahoma public school district
2 within the past year at the time of applying;

3 3. Agree to be a full-time public school classroom teacher or
4 school counselor in the state for a minimum of five (5) years;

5 4. Submit proof of his or her most recent teaching or school
6 counselor employment which may include a paystub or letter from the
7 school district superintendent or board of education;

8 5. Submit proof provided by the school district where the
9 applicant will be employed as a full-time classroom teacher or
10 school counselor;

11 6. Attest that the information in the application is factual to
12 the best of his or her knowledge; and

13 7. Any additional requirements established by the State Board
14 of Education.

15 D. The signing bonus shall be Thirty-five Thousand Dollars
16 (\$35,000.00) per participant. Upon verification required by
17 subsection E of this section, the signing bonus shall be paid to
18 participants no later than October 31 of each year or within thirty
19 (30) days of the first day of school, whichever is earlier.

20 E. 1. Prior to payment of any signing bonuses, the Department
21 shall verify all of the information submitted by the applicant
22 pursuant to subsection C of this section is accurate and confirm the
23 applicant is eligible to participate in the signing bonus program.

24

1 2. Prior to the beginning of each school year after the
2 participant's first year participating in the signing bonus program,
3 the participant shall provide verification to the Department that he
4 or she continues to be eligible for the signing bonus program,
5 including documentation from the Oklahoma school district where the
6 participant is employed full time as a classroom teacher or school
7 counselor.

8 3. If, after the payment of any signing bonus, the Department
9 discovers the information contained in the application is false, the
10 participant shall be required to return all payments to the
11 Department.

12 4. If, after the payment of any signing bonus, the participant
13 is not employed as a full-time public school classroom teacher or
14 school counselor in the state during the agreed to five-year period,
15 the participant shall be required to return to the Department a pro
16 rata amount based on the unfulfilled portion of the five-year
17 agreement period.

18 F. Any signing bonus paid pursuant to the Return to Teach
19 Signing Bonus Act shall not be included in the calculation of salary
20 for purposes of meeting the district or statutory minimum salary
21 schedule or for purposes of calculating Teachers' Retirement System
22 of Oklahoma contributions or benefits.

23 G. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to implement
24 the provisions of the Return to Teach Signing Bonus Act.

1 SECTION 2. 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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