

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

SENATE BILL 554

By: Pugh

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to teachers; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 6-190, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 122, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 6-190), which relates to teacher certification; directing stipends, rather than salary increases, be provided to teachers provided with certain certificates; prohibiting stipends from being included in certain calculations; amending Section 2, Chapter 359, O.S.L. 2022, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 122, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 6-190.2), which relates to the Teacher Empowerment Revolving Fund; modifying purpose of allocations; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 6-190, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 122, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 6-190), is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-190. A. The board of education of each school district shall employ and contract in writing, as required in Section 6-101 of this title, only with persons certified to teach by the State Board of Education in accordance with the Oklahoma Teacher

1 Preparation Act, except as otherwise provided for by Section 6-101  
2 of this title and by other law.

3 B. The Board shall issue a certificate to teach to any person  
4 who:

5 1. Has successfully completed the teacher education program  
6 required by the Commission for Educational Quality and  
7 Accountability;

8 2. Has graduated from an accredited institution of higher  
9 education that has approval or accreditation for teacher education;

10 3. Has met all other requirements as may be established by the  
11 Board;

12 4. Has made the necessary application and paid the competency  
13 examination fee in an amount and as prescribed by the Commission;

14 5. Has successfully completed the competency examination  
15 required in Section 6-187 of this title; and

16 6. Beginning November 1, 2001, has on file with the Board a  
17 current Oklahoma criminal history record from the Oklahoma State  
18 Bureau of Investigation as well as a national criminal history  
19 record check as defined in Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma  
20 Statutes. Upon receipt of the Oklahoma criminal history record, the  
21 Board may issue a temporary certificate which shall be effective  
22 until receipt of the national fingerprint-based criminal history  
23 record. The person applying for a certificate shall be responsible  
24 for the cost of the criminal history records.

1 C. The Board shall issue a certificate to teach to any person  
2 who:

3 1. Holds an out-of-state certificate and meets the requirements  
4 set forth in subsection G of this section;

5 2. Holds certification from the National Board for Professional  
6 Teaching Standards;

7 3. Holds an out-of-country certificate and meets the  
8 requirements set forth in subsection F of this section; or

9 4. Has successfully completed a competency examination used in  
10 the majority of other states or comparable customized exam and meets  
11 the requirements set forth in subsection H of this section.

12 D. Beginning July 1, 2004, any person applying for initial  
13 Oklahoma certification shall have on file with the Board a current  
14 Oklahoma criminal history record from the Oklahoma State Bureau of  
15 Investigation as well as a national criminal history record check as  
16 defined in Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Upon  
17 receipt of the Oklahoma criminal history record, the Board may issue  
18 a temporary certificate which shall be effective until receipt of  
19 the national fingerprint-based criminal history record. The person  
20 applying for a certificate shall be responsible for the cost of the  
21 criminal history records.

22 E. Any person holding a valid certificate, issued prior to  
23 January 1, 1997, shall be a certified teacher for purposes of the  
24 Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act, subject to any professional

1 development requirements prescribed by the Oklahoma Teacher  
2 Preparation Act or by the State Board of Education.

3 F. 1. The Board shall issue a certificate to teach to a person  
4 who holds a valid out-of-country certificate and meets any  
5 requirements established by the Board. The certificate to teach  
6 shall only be for those subject areas and grade levels most closely  
7 aligned to the subject areas and grade levels recognized on the out-  
8 of-country certificate.

9 2. A person who meets the requirements of paragraph 1 of this  
10 subsection shall not be required to take any competency examinations  
11 in those subject areas and grade levels most closely aligned to the  
12 subject areas and grade levels recognized on the out-of-country  
13 certificate.

14 3. A person who meets the requirements of paragraph 1 of this  
15 subsection shall have on file with the Board a current Oklahoma  
16 criminal history record check from the Oklahoma State Bureau of  
17 Investigation as well as a national criminal history record check as  
18 defined in Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Upon  
19 receipt of the Oklahoma criminal history record check, the Board may  
20 issue a temporary certificate which shall be effective until receipt  
21 of the national fingerprint-based criminal history record check.  
22 The person applying for a certificate shall be responsible for the  
23 cost of the criminal history record checks.

1           4. The Board shall promulgate rules establishing a process by  
2 which out-of-country certificates will be reviewed and evaluated for  
3 purposes of awarding a certificate to teach pursuant to this  
4 subsection.

5           G. 1. The Board shall issue a certificate to teach to a person  
6 who holds a valid out-of-state certificate. The certificate to  
7 teach shall only be for those subject areas and grade levels most  
8 closely aligned to the subject areas and grade levels recognized on  
9 the out-of-state certificate.

10           2. A person who meets the requirements of paragraph 1 of this  
11 subsection shall not be required to take any competency examinations  
12 in those subject areas and grade levels most closely aligned to the  
13 subject areas and grade levels recognized on the out-of-state  
14 certificate.

15           3. A person who meets the requirements of this subsection shall  
16 have on file with the Board a current Oklahoma criminal history  
17 record check from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation as well  
18 as a national criminal history record check as defined in Section  
19 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Upon receipt of the  
20 Oklahoma criminal history record check, the Board may issue a  
21 temporary certificate which shall be effective until receipt of the  
22 national fingerprint-based criminal history record check. The  
23 person applying for a certificate shall be responsible for the cost  
24 of the criminal history record checks.

1 H. 1. The Board shall issue a certificate to teach to a person  
2 who has successfully completed a competency exam used in a majority  
3 of the other states. The certificate to teach shall only be for  
4 those subject areas and grade levels that correspond with a  
5 certification area used in Oklahoma.

6 2. A person who meets the requirements of paragraph 1 of this  
7 subsection shall have on file with the Board a current Oklahoma  
8 criminal history record check from the Oklahoma State Bureau of  
9 Investigation as well as a national criminal history record check as  
10 defined in Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Upon  
11 receipt of the Oklahoma criminal history record check, the Board may  
12 issue a temporary certificate which shall be effective until receipt  
13 of the national fingerprint-based criminal history record check.  
14 The person applying for a certificate shall be responsible for the  
15 cost of the criminal history record checks.

16 I. 1. The Board may establish new levels of teacher  
17 certificates: advanced, lead, and master. Each level shall have a  
18 ~~salary increase requirement~~ stipend paid with state dollars from the  
19 lottery funds as provided in Section 713 of Title 3A of the Oklahoma  
20 Statutes. The advanced certificate shall include a ~~salary increase~~  
21 stipend of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00), the lead certificate  
22 shall include a ~~salary increase~~ stipend of Five Thousand Dollars  
23 (\$5,000.00), and the master certificate shall include a ~~salary~~  
24 ~~increase~~ stipend of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00).

1           2. A teacher who works in a school with an enrollment of forty  
2 percent (40%) or more of students who are economically disadvantaged  
3 as defined in Section 18-109.5 of this title or a school district  
4 with an enrollment of fewer than one thousand students shall be paid  
5 a one-time award in addition to the ~~salary increases~~ stipends  
6 provided in paragraph 1 of this subsection:

- 7           a. One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) for an  
8           advanced certificate,
- 9           b. Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for a  
10           lead certificate, and
- 11           c. Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for a master  
12           certificate.

13           3. School districts may identify and designate the highest  
14 quality teachers for advanced, lead, and master certificates.  
15 Participating districts shall submit designation plans to the State  
16 Department of Education for evaluation and approval. Districts  
17 shall have local control and flexibility in determining how to  
18 evaluate teachers and assign designations, but, at a minimum, the  
19 designation system shall include a teacher observation, out-of-  
20 classroom time, and a student performance component.

- 21           a. Teacher observation shall be based on the district's  
22           selected Oklahoma Teacher and Leader Effectiveness  
23           Evaluation System (TLE) evaluation tool or an  
24           alternate method of evaluation; provided, the method

1 is evidenced-based. Alternate methods of evaluation  
2 shall not replace the requirements of Section 6-101.16  
3 of this title.

4 b. Each school district that elects to participate in  
5 assigning advanced, lead, and master teacher  
6 certificates shall include an out-of-classroom  
7 component for its assigned teachers to allow for  
8 professional growth opportunities while staying in the  
9 classroom. How out-of-classroom time is allotted and  
10 managed shall be determined by the school district and  
11 submitted as part of its designation plan to the State  
12 Department of Education for review and approval.

13 c. Student performance measures may be determined by the  
14 district and may include, but shall not be limited to,  
15 pre- and post-tests, summative or formative, and  
16 portfolios. The school district application shall  
17 show evidence of validity and reliability of the  
18 measures.

19 Districts may use additional factors in determining which  
20 teachers are eligible to receive a designation, such as student  
21 surveys, teacher leadership responsibilities, teacher mentorship  
22 responsibilities, family surveys, demonstration of district core  
23 values, teacher peer surveys, and contributions to the broader  
24 school community. No more than ten percent (10%) of each school



1 district's teachers may be designated as an advanced, lead, or  
2 master teacher in any given school year.

3 4. If a school district chooses to participate in this program,  
4 the state shall provide the ~~increased salary~~ stipend amounts  
5 indicated for advanced, lead, and master certificates in paragraph 1  
6 of this subsection ~~above the base pay~~.

7 5. School districts that designate teachers for advanced, lead,  
8 and master certificates do not have to participate in annual TLE  
9 evaluations for the designated teachers.

10 6. School districts may designate teachers for advanced, lead,  
11 or master certificates two times per year, once prior to the  
12 beginning of the school year, and once prior to the beginning of the  
13 second semester. Teachers statewide who receive these designations  
14 shall be placed in professional development cohorts and provided  
15 additional training opportunities from the State Department of  
16 Education.

17 7. After initial approval by the State Department of Education,  
18 the Department shall review and validate each participating school  
19 district's teacher evaluation system biennially.

20 8. The State Department of Education shall annually report the  
21 school districts participating in the program, the number of  
22 advanced, lead, and master certificates awarded, and the total  
23 amount in state funding that was distributed to teachers from the  
24

1 Teacher Empowerment Revolving Fund created in Section 6-190.2 of  
2 this title.

3 9. The selection criteria; designation of advanced, lead, or  
4 master teachers; and any associated ~~salary increases~~ stipend amounts  
5 shall not be subject to collective bargaining.

6 10. Stipends provided pursuant to this subsection shall not be  
7 included in the calculation of the teacher's salary for purposes of  
8 meeting the district or statutory minimum salary schedule or for  
9 purposes of calculating Teachers' Retirement System of Oklahoma  
10 contributions or benefits.

11 J. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to implement  
12 a renewal schedule and associated fees for advanced, lead, and  
13 master teaching certificates. The rules shall allow a teacher that  
14 no longer meets the requirements of an advanced, lead, or master  
15 teaching certificate to make application for the standard teaching  
16 certificate.

17 K. The terms of the contracts issued to those holding advanced,  
18 lead, and master teaching certificates shall include the following:

19 1. Advanced: an additional five (5) days to be used to  
20 strengthen instructional leadership. A person with an advanced  
21 teaching certificate shall receive an annual ~~salary increase~~ stipend  
22 of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) or the district's daily rate  
23 of pay, whichever is higher, in addition to the salary for which the  
24 teacher qualifies pursuant to Section 18-114.15 of this title. This

1 ~~increase~~ stipend shall be funded by state dollars from the lottery  
2 funds as provided in Section 713 of Title 3A of the Oklahoma  
3 Statutes and shall be paid ~~as regular annual compensation~~ directly  
4 to teachers through school districts;

5       2. Lead: an additional ten (10) days to be used to strengthen  
6 instructional leadership. A person with a lead teaching certificate  
7 shall receive an annual ~~salary increase~~ stipend of Five Thousand  
8 Dollars (\$5,000.00) or the district's daily rate of pay, whichever  
9 is higher, in addition to the salary for which the teacher qualifies  
10 pursuant to Section 18-114.15 of this title. This ~~increase~~ stipend  
11 shall be funded by state dollars from the lottery funds as provided  
12 in Section 713 of Title 3A of the Oklahoma Statutes and shall be  
13 paid ~~as regular annual compensation~~ directly to teachers through  
14 school districts; and

15       3. Master: an additional fifteen (15) days to be used to  
16 strengthen leadership. A person with a master teaching certificate  
17 shall receive an annual ~~salary increase~~ stipend of Ten Thousand  
18 Dollars (\$10,000.00) or the district's daily rate of pay, whichever  
19 is higher, in addition to the salary for which the teacher qualifies  
20 pursuant to Section 18-114.15 of this title. This ~~increase~~ stipend  
21 shall be funded by state dollars from the lottery funds as provided  
22 in Section 713 of Title 3A of the Oklahoma Statutes and shall be  
23 paid ~~as regular annual compensation~~ directly to teachers through  
24 school districts.

1 If a person with an advanced, lead, or master teaching  
2 certificate changes school districts during the life of the  
3 certificate, the terms of the contracts required in this subsection  
4 shall be subject to approval by the new employing school district.

5 L. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, the Department shall  
6 make the teaching certificates provided for in this section  
7 available for any person who has received a recommendation from his  
8 or her school district and who meets the eligibility criteria as  
9 outlined in each school district's teacher evaluation system  
10 provided for in subsection I of this section.

11 M. The funding necessary for the administration of this section  
12 shall be provided from the Teacher Empowerment Revolving Fund  
13 created in Section 6-190.2 of this title. If funding for the  
14 administration of the teaching certificates listed in subsection I  
15 is not available, the Department shall not be required to fulfill  
16 the requirements listed in subsections I, K, and L of this section.

17 N. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules to  
18 implement the provisions of Section 6-180 et seq. of this title.

19 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY Section 2, Chapter 359, O.S.L.  
20 2022, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 122, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S.  
21 Supp. 2024, Section 6-190.2), is amended to read as follows:

22 Section 6-190.2. A. There is hereby created in the State  
23 Treasury a revolving fund for the State Department of Education to  
24 be designated the "Teacher Empowerment Revolving Fund". The

1 revolving fund shall be a continuing fund, without legislative  
2 appropriation, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall be  
3 under the control and management of the State Department of  
4 Education. Expenditures from the Teacher Empowerment Revolving Fund  
5 shall be budgeted and expended as provided for in subsection B of  
6 this section.

7 B. The State Department of Education shall utilize the funds  
8 for the program outlined in Section 6-190 of this title. Funding  
9 shall be allocated to school districts to provide the ~~increased~~  
10 ~~salary~~ stipend amounts indicated for advanced, lead, and master  
11 certificates as provided for in subsection I of Section 6-190 of  
12 this title on a first-come, first-served basis until the cash is  
13 exhausted for the school year.

14 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

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

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