

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

3 HOUSE BILL 2559

By: McBride and Baker

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to teacher scholarships; amending 70
8 O.S. 2021, Section 698.1, as amended by Section 1,
9 Chapter 344, O.S.L. 2022 (70 O.S. Supp. 2022, Section
10 698.1), which relates to the Oklahoma Future Teacher
11 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.

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

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

18 Section 698.1 A. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
19 Education shall establish and maintain an incentive scholarship
20 program and teacher employment incentive program, as funding is
21 available, to encourage the preparation of public school teachers
22 for prekindergarten through twelfth grade, including minority
23 teachers, at all state public higher education institutions or
24 private higher education institutions accredited pursuant to Section

1 4103 of this title and incentivize employment as public teachers for
2 prekindergarten through twelfth grade in the state for at least five
3 (5) years, to be known as the ~~Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship~~
4 ~~and Employment Incentive~~ Inspired to Teach Program. Prospective
5 teachers planning to pursue an undergraduate teacher education
6 program at an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation program shall
7 be considered if they graduated from ~~an Oklahoma~~ high school,
8 completed high-school level instruction at home, or completed
9 General Educational Development (GED) test requirements; meet the
10 higher education admission standards~~;~~; and declare a pre-education
11 major or major in an approved Oklahoma teacher preparation degree
12 program leading to a standard teaching certificate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 3. An undergraduate student who is a teacher education major
16 with an approved reasonable accommodation from Student Accessibility
17 Services at the institution due to a documented disability and who
18 has been approved to take less than twelve (12) credit hours.

19 B D. It is the intent of the Oklahoma Legislature that the
20 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education create a committee
21 composed of educators, teacher educators from the participating
22 institutions, and representatives of the public schools and the
23 State Department of Education to provide recommendations to the
24 State Regents to improve effectiveness of the ~~program~~ Inspired to

1 Teach Program. The committee shall prepare and deliver a report on
2 the program to the Legislature on or before July 1 of each year.

3 € E. Each scholarship participant, prior to entry into the
4 ~~program~~ Inspired to Teach Program, shall have agreed to teach in an
5 Oklahoma public prekindergarten through twelfth grade school for a
6 minimum of five (5) consecutive years upon graduation and licensure
7 as a teacher. Any scholarship participant failing to maintain a 2.5
8 grade point average throughout matriculation, changing to an
9 ineligible area of study, failing to meet satisfactory academic
10 progress standards, withdrawing or otherwise leaving school, or
11 failing to meet requirements for licensure and certification to
12 teach as established by law shall be subject to disqualification
13 from the program.

14 Ð F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are
15 authorized to make employment incentive payments pursuant to the
16 provisions of this section to ~~program~~ Inspired to Teach Program
17 participants who are employed as traditionally certified teachers in
18 Oklahoma public prekindergarten through twelfth grade schools
19 following graduation. Incentive payments may be awarded following
20 each consecutive year of satisfactory service as documented by the
21 employing school district, up to five (5) years of service for
22 scholarship recipients as provided in subsection A of this section,
23 upon graduation from an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation
24 degree program. The maximum amount of employment incentive payments

1 for any qualified participant shall be Four Thousand Dollars
2 (\$4,000.00) per year for up to five (5) years, not to exceed a total
3 of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) per participant.

4 ¶ G. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
5 require the execution of appropriate contracts with eligible ~~program~~
6 Inspired to Teach Program participants. Participants failing to
7 comply with the requirements of this section or failing to provide
8 current contact information shall not be eligible for the employment
9 incentive payments provided for in this section. The Chancellor of
10 the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, with the approval
11 of the State Regents, may contract with any other appropriate
12 organization or unit of government for the administration of the
13 provisions of this section.

14 ¶ H. If sufficient funds are not available for employment
15 incentive payments to qualified participants during any fiscal year,
16 the Chancellor may make reductions in the payments made to qualified
17 participants.

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

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

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