

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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

3 HOUSE BILL 2242

By: Waldron

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S.
8 2021, Section 698.1, as last amended by Section 1,
Chapter 249, O.S.L. 2023 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section
9 698.1), which relates to the Inspired to Teach
Program; requiring the State Regents to establish
10 certain program for certain advanced degrees;
providing for scholarships for certain advanced
11 degrees; modifying definition; requiring certain
agreement by advanced degree program participants;
12 adding certain advanced degree participants to
incentive payments; providing an effective date; and
13 declaring an emergency.

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

16 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 698.1, as
17 last amended by Section 1, Chapter 249, O.S.L. 2023 (70 O.S. Supp.
18 2024, Section 698.1), is amended to read as follows:

19 Section 698.1. A. 1. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
20 Education shall establish and maintain an incentive scholarship
21 program and teacher employment incentive program, as funding is
22 available, to encourage the preparation of public school teachers
23 for prekindergarten through twelfth grade, including minority
24 teachers, at all state public higher education institutions or

1 private higher education institutions accredited pursuant to Section
2 4103 of this title and incentivize employment as public teachers for
3 prekindergarten through twelfth grade in the state for at least five
4 (5) years, to be known as the Inspired to Teach Program.

5 Prospective teachers planning to pursue an undergraduate teacher
6 education program at an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation
7 program shall be considered if they graduated from 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.~~ 2. 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.~~

22 a. One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per academic year for
23 up to three (3) academic years for full-time students
24

1 who have earned less than ninety (90) credit hours;
2 and

3 ~~2.~~

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

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

10 B. 1. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
11 establish and maintain an incentive scholarship program and
12 incentive program, as funding is available, to encourage the
13 advanced education of public school counselors, speech pathologists,
14 special education teachers, and school administrators, at all state
15 public higher education institutions or private higher education
16 institutions accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of this title and
17 incentivize employment as public school employees for at least five
18 (5) years, to be included in the Inspired to Teach Program.

19 Prospective school counselors, speech pathologists, special
20 education teachers, and school administrators planning to pursue a
21 graduate degree in school counseling, speech pathology, special
22 education, or school administration at an accredited Oklahoma
23 graduate degree program shall be considered if they:

24 a. have an undergraduate degree,

- 1 b. meet the higher education admission standards for the
2 graduate degree program, and
- 3 c. declare a major in an approved Oklahoma graduate
4 degree program for school counseling, speech
5 pathology, special education, or school
6 administration.

7 2. To the extent that funds are available, scholarships,
8 renewable for up to two (2) additional years for qualified students
9 meeting satisfactory academic progress standards in completing a
10 graduate degree program, shall be awarded to cover costs of tuition,
11 general enrollment fees, other fees, books, materials, and services
12 provided by the institution, including room and board, in the
13 following manner:

- 14 a. One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per academic year for
15 up to two (2) academic years for full-time students
16 who have earned less than ninety (90) credit hours,
17 and
- 18 b. Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for the
19 final academic year for full-time students who have
20 earned ninety (90) or more credit hours.

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

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

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

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

8 3. An undergraduate student who is a teacher education major
9 with an approved reasonable accommodation from Student Accessibility
10 Services at the institution due to a documented disability and who
11 has been approved to take less than twelve (12) credit hours; or

12 4. A graduate student enrolled in nine (9) or more semester
13 credits toward graduate degree requirements.

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

22 E. Each scholarship participant, prior to entry into the
23 Inspired to Teach Program, shall have agreed to ~~teach~~ be employed in
24 an Oklahoma public prekindergarten through twelfth grade school for

1 a minimum of five (5) consecutive years upon either graduation and
2 licensure as a teacher or graduation with a graduate degree in
3 school counseling, speech pathology, special education, or school
4 administration. Any scholarship participant failing to maintain a
5 2.5 grade point average throughout matriculation, changing to an
6 ineligible area of study, failing to meet satisfactory academic
7 progress standards, withdrawing or otherwise leaving school, or
8 failing to meet requirements for licensure and certification to
9 teach as established by law shall be subject to disqualification
10 from the program.

11 F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are
12 authorized to make employment incentive payments pursuant to the
13 provisions of this section to Inspired to Teach Program participants
14 who are employed as traditionally certified teachers in Oklahoma
15 public prekindergarten through twelfth grade schools following
16 graduation or who are employed as school counselors, speech
17 pathologists, special education teachers, or school administrators.
18 Incentive payments may be awarded following each consecutive year of
19 satisfactory service as documented by the employing school district,
20 up to five (5) years of service for scholarship recipients as
21 provided in ~~subsection~~ subsections A and B of this section, upon
22 graduation from an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation degree
23 program. The maximum amount of employment incentive payments for
24 any qualified participant shall be Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00)

1 per year for up to five (5) years, not to exceed a total of Twenty
2 Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) per participant.

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

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

17 I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may, at the
18 time an award is made on behalf of the Inspired to Teach Program,
19 set aside funds for the full commitment made to an eligible student.

20 J. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may utilize
21 Inspired to Teach Program designated funds for administration of the
22 program.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.
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1 SECTION 3. 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.

5 60-1-11708 AQH 12/13/24
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