

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas
2 85th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2005
4

As Engrossed: H4/5/05
A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1982

5 By: Representative Mahony
6
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 *AN ACT TO CREATE THE TEACHER OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM*
10 *AND THE DUAL CERTIFICATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO*
11 *PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS TO TEACHERS RETURNING TO*
12 *COLLEGE TO RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION;*
13 *AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.*

Subtitle

14
15 *AN ACT TO CREATE THE TEACHER OPPORTUNITY*
16 *PROGRAM AND THE DUAL CERTIFICATION*
17 *INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE*
18 *SCHOLARSHIPS TO TEACHERS RETURNING TO*
19 *COLLEGE.*
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21

22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
23

24 *SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-81-601 is amended to read as follows:*
25 *6-81-601. Purpose.*

26 *There is an existing need in the state to enhance the academic*
27 *expertise of employed teachers ~~and administrators~~ in Arkansas by providing*
28 *opportunities for them to pursue additional college instruction related to*
29 *their employment.*
30

31 *SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-81-602 is amended to read as follows:*
32 *6-81-602. Establishment.*

33 *There is established a program to be known as the Teacher ~~and~~*
34 *~~Administrator Enhancement and Retraining Grant~~ Opportunity Program.*
35

36 *SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-81-603(a) is amended to read as follows:*



1 (a) ~~This Teacher and Administrator Enhancement and Retraining Grant~~
2 Opportunity Program shall be administered by the Department of Higher
3 Education, which shall have the authority to establish necessary rules,
4 regulations, procedures, and selection criteria for the administration of the
5 program and to designate necessary forms and schedules.

6
7 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-81-604(1), pertaining to qualifications
8 for teacher opportunity grants, is amended to read as follows:

9 (1) Grant recipients shall be bona fide residents of the State
10 of Arkansas, as defined by the Department of Higher Education, ~~and be~~
11 ~~citizens of the United States or permanent resident aliens;~~

12
13 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-81-605 is amended to read as follows:
14 6-81-605. Grants - Priority.

15 (a) The first priority for the award of funds under the Teacher
16 Opportunity Program is the award of scholarships under the Dual Certification
17 Incentive Program, §§ 6-81-607 through 6-81-610. If funds are available
18 after all awards are made under the Dual Certification Incentive Program,
19 then additional grants may be made in accordance with the following:

20 ~~(a)~~ (1) Students may receive grants up to but not in excess of
21 the cost of student fees, books, and instructional supplies at the public
22 institution of higher education in this state assessing the highest rate of
23 student fees; and

24 ~~(b)~~ (2) The grant or grants made to one (1) individual within
25 one (1) fiscal year may not exceed the costs associated with six (6) semester
26 credit hours or the equivalent of six (6) semester credit hours.

27 (b) The Department of Higher Education shall determine priorities for
28 awarding grants in the event there are more applicants than funds available.
29 Priorities shall be determined in coordination with the Department of
30 Education and shall be based on the needs of the state.

31 ~~(c) Should the number of the grant requests exceed funding available,~~
32 ~~priority will be given to those teachers or administrators who did not~~
33 ~~successfully complete tests of proficiency in basic academic skills or~~
34 ~~subject area content that teachers and administrators employed in the public~~
35 ~~schools may be required to take pursuant to state law or regulation of the~~
36 ~~State Board of Education.~~

1 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 81, Subchapter 6
2 is amended to the following additional sections:

3 6-81-607. Definitions.

4 For purposes of this subchapter:

5 (1) "Classroom teacher" means an individual who is required to
6 hold a teaching license from the Department of Education and who is:

7 (A) Engaged directly in instruction with students in a
8 classroom setting for more than seventy percent (70%) of the individual's
9 contracted time;

10 (B) A media specialist or librarian; or

11 (C) A guidance counselor;

12 (2) "Dual certification" means certification to teach in more
13 than one (1) subject matter; and

14 (3) "Dual certification incentive bonus" means a bonus that is
15 given one (1) time every school year following the year of obtaining dual
16 certification under the Dual Certification Incentive Program.

17
18 6-81-608. Dual certification incentive program.

19 (a) There is created the Dual Certification Incentive Program to
20 encourage classroom teachers currently employed by school districts in the
21 state to return to college to obtain certification in one (1) or more
22 additional subject areas.

23 (b) The Dual Certification Incentive Program shall be administered by
24 the Department of Higher Education.

25
26 6-81-609. Dual certification funding.

27 (a)(1)(A) A classroom teacher employed by a school district in the
28 state may receive a scholarship from the Dual Certification Incentive Program
29 if he or she:

30 (i) Is recommended for a scholarship by the local
31 board of directors of the school district in which he or she is employed
32 based on the recommendation of the teacher's building level principal and
33 superintendent;

34 (ii) Agrees to return to an approved institution of
35 higher education to obtain certification in:

36 (a) An additional subject matter declared to

1 be a shortage area by the Department of Education;

2 (b) An additional subject matter that he or
3 she is currently teaching, but for which he or she does not have a
4 certification; or

5 (c) An additional subject matter and grade
6 level in which the school district has requested a waiver under § 6-17-309;
7 and

8 (iii) Agrees to maintain a minimum number of
9 semester credit hours commensurate with the amount of the scholarship as
10 determined by the Department of Higher Education.

11 (B)(i) A scholarship from the Dual Certification Incentive
12 Program shall include funding for the cost of tuition, books, and fees not to
13 exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000) each college year. The amount of the
14 scholarship shall be commensurate with maintaining a minimum number of
15 semester credit hours as determined by the Department of Higher Education.

16 (ii) Each scholarship awarded under the Dual Certification
17 Incentive Program shall be funded with a two-to-one match with the local
18 school districts, whereby the Department of Higher Education shall provide
19 two dollars (\$2) for each dollar (\$1) a local school district provides for
20 scholarships.

21 (iii) The number and the amount of scholarship
22 recipients selected by the Department of Higher Education shall be contingent
23 on the appropriation and availability of funding for such purpose.

24 (C)(i) Local school districts may use moneys appropriated
25 from the public school funds or any other source to fund the school
26 district's local match requirements for no more than four (4) scholarships
27 under the Dual Certification Incentive Program for classroom teachers
28 currently employed by the school district who have no less than three (3)
29 years of experience as a licensed classroom teacher in a public school
30 located in the State of Arkansas.

31 (ii) Any school district that requests a waiver of
32 teacher certification requirements under § 6-17-309 because the school
33 district is not able to hire a qualified certified teacher to fill the
34 position shall offer and fund a Dual Certification Incentive Program
35 scholarship to any qualified applicant willing to obtain dual certification
36 in the grade level and subject matter for which the waiver was requested.

1 (2) To be eligible for a scholarship under the Dual
2 Certification Incentive Program, the person shall be:

3 (A) Employed as a classroom teacher by the same school
4 district for no less than three (3) years of teaching immediately preceding
5 the application; and

6 (B) Accepted for enrollment in a classroom teacher
7 education program that will lead to a certification to teach in a subject
8 area that:

9 (i) Is different from the classroom teacher's
10 current area of certification; and

11 (ii)(a) Has been identified as a subject area with a
12 shortage of classroom teachers as declared by the Department of Education; or

13 (b) Is in the grade level and subject-matter
14 area for which the school district has requested a waiver under § 6-17-309.

15 (b) The recipients of the Dual Certification Incentive Program
16 scholarships awarded by a school district shall be selected by that
17 district's local board of directors based on the recommendation of the
18 teacher's building level principal and superintendent or as required by
19 subsection (a)(1)(C)(ii).

20 (c)(1) Any classroom teacher awarded a scholarship under the Dual
21 Certification Incentive Program may be allowed administrative leave with pay
22 as provided under the district's certified personnel policies as is necessary
23 for the classroom teacher to:

24 (A) Attend college classes necessary to obtain the
25 additional certification;

26 (B) Travel to or from the college; and

27 (C) Take state-mandated tests as may be necessary to
28 obtain the additional certification.

29 (2) The cost of a classroom teacher's administrative leave
30 required under this subsection (c) shall be credited toward the local
31 district's funding match obligations under this section.

32 (d)(1) A classroom teacher who receives funds from the state or school
33 district for participation in the Dual Certification Incentive Program shall
34 repay the Department of Education, Department of Higher Education, or the
35 school district the total amount of the scholarships received under the Dual
36 Certification Incentive Program if the classroom teacher:

1 (A) Does not receive an additional certification within
2 three (3) calendar years after he or she first received funding under the
3 Dual Certification Incentive Program; or

4 (B) Becomes certified under the Dual Certification
5 Incentive Program but does not teach or serve as a classroom teacher in an
6 Arkansas public school district for three (3) continuous years immediately
7 following receipt of the additional certification.

8 (2) The State Board of Education may suspend the Arkansas
9 classroom teacher's license of any individual who fails, when required to do
10 so, to repay moneys contributed by the Department of Education, Department of
11 Higher Education, or a school district for participation in the Dual
12 Certification Incentive Program.

13 (3) Repayment of moneys contributed by the Department of
14 Education, or Department of Higher Education or school district is not
15 required if, due to the death or disability of the classroom teacher or other
16 extenuating circumstances as may be recognized by the State Board of
17 Education, the classroom teacher does not complete the certification process
18 or does not teach in the Arkansas public school system for three (3)
19 continuous school years after completing the certification funded by the Dual
20 Certification Incentive Program.

21 (e)(1) The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, shall
22 promulgate rules as necessary to implement the Dual Certification Incentive
23 Program.

24 (2) The number of classroom teacher participants each year shall
25 be determined by the amount of funding available for the program and the
26 limitations set under this section.

27
28 6-81-610. Dual certification bonus.

29 (a)(1) Upon attainment of a dual certification under the Dual
30 Certification Incentive Program, the Department of Education shall pay the
31 school district on behalf of the dually certified classroom teacher a bonus
32 of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) each school year that the classroom
33 teacher:

34 (A) Is employed full-time as a classroom teacher in an
35 Arkansas public school district; and

36 (B) Is teaching no fewer than two (2) class periods in

1 each of the different subject matter areas for which he or she received
2 certification.

3 (2) The dual certification incentive bonus provided in this
4 section shall not be retroactive.

5 (3) No person shall receive a dual certification incentive bonus
6 irrespective of the person's past participation in the Dual State Teacher
7 Assistance Resource Program if he or she:

8 (A) Leaves the full-time employment of an Arkansas public
9 school district;

10 (B) Becomes employed as a district-level central office
11 administrator or any other position that does not include teaching students;

12 (C) Is employed by an Arkansas institution of higher
13 education, Department of Higher Education, or the Department of Education; or

14 (D) Is employed by an education service cooperative and
15 does not teach in a classroom with students.

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18 */s/ Mahony*
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