

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 87th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2009

A Bill

SENATE BILL 852

4
5 By: Senators Broadway, Salmon, Bookout
6 By: Representatives J. Roebuck, Abernathy, M. Burris

For An Act To Be Entitled

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

Subtitle

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16 TO AMEND THE TEACHER OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM
17 AND TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS TO TEACHERS
18 RETURNING TO COLLEGE TO RECEIVE AN
19 ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION.

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

23
24 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-81-605 is amended to read as follows:
25 6-81-605. Grants – Priority.

26 (a)(1) The first priority for the award of funds under the Teacher
27 Opportunity Program is the award of ~~scholarships~~ reimbursements under the
28 Dual Certification Incentive Program, §§ 6-81-607 – ~~6-81-610~~ 6-81-609.

29 (2) If funds are available after all awards are made under the
30 Dual Certification Incentive Program, then additional ~~grants~~ reimbursements
31 may be made in accordance with the following:

32 (A) Students may receive ~~grants~~ reimbursements up to but
33 not in excess of the cost of student fees, books, and instructional supplies
34 at the public institution of higher education in this state assessing the
35 highest rate of student fees; ~~and~~

36 (B) The ~~grant or grants~~ reimbursements made to one (1)



1 individual within one (1) fiscal year may not exceed the costs associated
 2 with six (6) semester credit hours or the equivalent of six (6) semester
 3 credit hours; and

4 (C) All other requirements established by the Department
 5 of Higher Education are met.

6 (b)(1) The Department of Higher Education shall determine priorities
 7 for awarding ~~grants~~ reimbursements ~~in the event that~~ if there are more
 8 applicants than funds available.

9 (2) Priorities shall be determined in coordination with the
 10 Department of Education and shall be based on the needs of the state.

11
 12 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-81-607 is amended to read as follows:
 13 6-81-607. Definitions.

14 ~~For purposes of~~ As used in this subchapter:

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

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

20 (B) A media specialist or librarian; ~~or~~

21 (C) A guidance counselor; or

22 (D) An administrator;

23 (2) "Dual certification" means certification to teach in more
 24 than one (1) subject ~~matter~~ area; and

25 (3) ~~"Dual certification incentive bonus" means a bonus that is~~
 26 ~~given one (1) time every school year following the year of obtaining dual~~
 27 ~~certification under the Dual Certification Incentive Program~~ "Student" means
 28 a classroom teacher who is attending an institution of higher education as
 29 part of the Dual Certification Incentive Program, §§ 6-81-607-6-81-609.

30
 31 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-81-608, concerning dual certification
 32 incentive program, is amended to add additional subsections to read as
 33 follows:

34 (c)(1) A student may receive a reimbursement not to exceed the cost of
 35 student fees, books, and instructional supplies.

36 (2) The student fee reimbursement amount shall be based on the

1 student fees of the state-supported institution of higher education that
 2 assesses the highest rate of student fees in this state.

3 (d) The reimbursement made to a student in one (1) fiscal year may not
 4 exceed the cost associated with six (6) semester credit hours or the
 5 equivalent of six (6) semester credit hours.

7 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-81-609 is amended to read as follows:
 8 6-81-609. Dual certification funding.

9 (a)(1)(A) A classroom teacher employed by a school district in the
 10 state may receive a ~~scholarship~~ reimbursement from the Dual Certification
 11 Incentive Program if ~~he or she~~ the classroom teacher+

12 ~~(i) Is recommended for a scholarship by the local~~
 13 ~~board of directors of the school district in which he or she is employed~~
 14 ~~based on the recommendation of the teacher's building level principal and~~
 15 ~~superintendent;~~

16 ~~(ii) Agrees to return~~ returns to an approved
 17 institution of higher education to obtain certification in an additional
 18 subject area:

19 ~~(a)(i) An additional subject matter declared~~
 20 Declared to be a shortage area by the Department of Education;

21 ~~(b)(ii) An additional subject matter that he~~
 22 ~~or she~~ That the classroom teacher is currently teaching but for which he or
 23 she does not have a certification; or

24 ~~(c)(iii) An additional subject matter and~~
 25 ~~grade~~ And grade level in which the school district has requested a waiver
 26 under § 6-17-309; ~~and.~~

27 ~~(iii) Agrees to maintain a minimum number of~~
 28 ~~semester credit hours commensurate with the amount of the scholarship as~~
 29 ~~determined by the Department of Higher Education.~~

30 (B)(i)~~(a)~~ A ~~scholarship~~ reimbursement from the Dual
 31 Certification Incentive Program shall include funding for the cost of
 32 tuition, books, and fees not to exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000) each
 33 college year.

34 ~~(b) The amount of the scholarship shall be~~
 35 ~~commensurate with maintaining a minimum number of semester credit hours as~~
 36 ~~determined by the Department of Higher Education.~~

1 ~~(ii) Each scholarship awarded under the program~~
 2 ~~shall be funded with a two to one match with the local school districts~~
 3 ~~whereby the Department of Higher Education shall provide two dollars (\$2.00)~~
 4 ~~for each dollar a local school district provides for scholarships.~~

5 ~~(iii)~~(ii) The amount of the scholarship
 6 reimbursement and the number of ~~scholarship~~ reimbursement recipients selected
 7 by the Department of Higher Education ~~shall be~~ is contingent on the
 8 appropriation and availability of funding for such a purpose.

9 ~~(C)(i) Local school districts may use moneys appropriated~~
 10 ~~from the public school funds or any other source to fund the school~~
 11 ~~district's local match requirements for no more than four (4) scholarships~~
 12 ~~under the program for classroom teachers currently employed by the school~~
 13 ~~district who have no less than three (3) years of experience as licensed~~
 14 ~~classroom teachers in a public school located in the State of Arkansas.~~

15 ~~(ii) (a) Any school district that requests a waiver~~
 16 ~~of teacher certification requirements under § 6-17-309 because the school~~
 17 ~~district is not able to hire a qualified certified teacher to fill the~~
 18 ~~position shall offer and fund a program scholarship to any qualified~~
 19 ~~applicant willing to obtain dual certification in the grade level and subject~~
 20 ~~matter for which the waiver was requested.~~

21 ~~(b) Program scholarships provided under this~~
 22 ~~subdivision (a)(1)(C)(ii) shall be funded in addition to the four (4)~~
 23 ~~scholarships under subdivision (a)(1)(C)(i) of this section with the two to-~~
 24 ~~one match funding described in subdivision (a)(1)(B)(ii) of this section.~~

25 (2) To be eligible for a ~~scholarship~~ reimbursement under the
 26 program, the person shall be:

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

30 (B) Accepted for enrollment in a classroom teacher
 31 education program that will lead to a certification to teach in a subject
 32 area that:

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

35 (ii) Either:

36 (a) Has been identified as a subject area with

1 a shortage of classroom teachers as declared by the Department of Education;
 2 or

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

5 ~~(b) The recipients of the program scholarships awarded by a school
 6 district shall be selected by that district's local board of directors based
 7 on the recommendation of the teacher's building level principal and
 8 superintendent or as required by subdivision (a)(1)(C)(ii) of this section.~~

9 ~~(c)(1) Any classroom teacher awarded a scholarship under the program
 10 may be allowed administrative leave with pay as provided under the district's
 11 certified personnel policies as is necessary for the classroom teacher to:~~

- 12 ~~(A) Attend college classes necessary to obtain the additional certification;~~
- 13 ~~- (B) Travel to or from the college; and~~
- 14 ~~- (C) Take state mandated tests as may be necessary to
 15 obtain the additional certification.~~

16 ~~- (2) The cost of a classroom teacher's administrative leave
 17 required under this subsection shall be credited toward the local district's
 18 funding match obligations under this section.~~

19 ~~(d) (1) A classroom teacher who receives funds from the state or
 20 school district for participation in the program shall repay the Department
 21 of Education, the Department of Higher Education, or the school district the
 22 total amount of the scholarships received under the program if the classroom
 23 teacher:~~

- 24 ~~- (A) Does not receive an additional certification within
 25 three (3) calendar years after he or she first received funding under the
 26 program; or~~
- 27 ~~- (B) Becomes certified under the program but does not teach
 28 or serve as a classroom teacher in an Arkansas public school district for
 29 three (3) continuous years immediately following receipt of the additional
 30 certification.~~

31 ~~(2) The State Board of Education may suspend the Arkansas
 32 classroom teacher's license of any individual who fails, when required to do
 33 so, to repay moneys contributed by the Department of Education, the
 34 Department of Higher Education, or a school district for participation in the
 35 program.~~

36 ~~- (3) Repayment of moneys contributed by the Department of~~

1 ~~Education, the Department of Higher Education, or the school district is not~~
 2 ~~required if due to the death or disability of the classroom teacher, or other~~
 3 ~~extenuating circumstances as may be recognized by the State Board of~~
 4 ~~Education, the classroom teacher does not complete the certification process~~
 5 ~~or does not teach in the Arkansas public school system for three (3)~~
 6 ~~continuous school years after completing the certification funded by the~~
 7 ~~program.~~

8 ~~(e)(b)(1)~~ The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
 9 promulgate rules as necessary to implement the program.

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

13
 14 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-81-610 is repealed.

15 ~~6-81-610. Dual certification bonus.~~

16 ~~(a)(1) Upon attainment of a dual certification under the Dual~~
 17 ~~Certification Incentive Program, the Department of Education shall pay the~~
 18 ~~school district on behalf of the dually certified classroom teacher a bonus~~
 19 ~~of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) each school year that the classroom~~
 20 ~~teacher:~~

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

23 - ~~(B) Is teaching no fewer than two (2) class periods in~~
 24 ~~each of the different subject matter areas for which he or she received~~
 25 ~~certification.~~

26 - ~~(2) The dual certification incentive bonus provided in this~~
 27 ~~section shall not be retroactive.~~

28 - ~~(3) No person shall receive a dual certification incentive bonus~~
 29 ~~irrespective of the person's past participation in the State Teacher~~
 30 ~~Assistance Resource Program if he or she:~~

31 - ~~(A) Leaves the full time employment of an Arkansas public~~
 32 ~~school district;~~

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

35 ~~(C) Is employed by an Arkansas institution of higher~~
 36 ~~education, the Department of Higher Education, or the Department of~~

1 ~~Education; or~~
2 - ~~(D) Is employed by an education service cooperative and~~
3 ~~does not teach in a classroom with students.~~

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