

State of Arkansas
87th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2009

A Bill

SENATE BILL 980

By: Senator Crumbly

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES FOR
TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN HIGH-
PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS; TO EQUALIZE TEACHER
SALARIES BETWEEN HIGH-PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
AND HIGHER PAYING SURROUNDING SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN
ARKANSAS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES FOR
TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AND
EQUALIZE TEACHER SALARIES IN HIGH-
PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-17-811 is amended to read as follows:
6-17-811. Incentives for teacher recruitment and retention in high-
priority districts.

(a)(1) As used in this section:

(A) "High-priority district" means a public school district:

(i) In which eighty percent (80%) or more of public
school students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program
under the National School Lunch Act based on the October 1 student count of
the previous year submitted to the Department of Education; and

(ii)(a) That Except as provided by subdivision
(a)(1)(A)(ii)(b) of this section, that had a three-quarter average daily
membership in the previous year of one thousand (1,000) or fewer students+.



(b) A resulting school district in a consolidation or a receiving district in an annexation shall continue to receive the funding provided under this section if each public school district in the consolidation or annexation was previously a high-priority district even if the average daily membership of the resulting or receiving district is one thousand (1,000) or higher.

(c) By April 1 of each year, the State Board of Education shall determine the districts that qualify as high-priority districts of the state;

~~(B)-(i)-(3)~~(A) "New teacher bonus" means an incentive bonus provided under subdivisions (b)(1)-(3) of this section to a teacher ~~that~~ who is within the first three (3) years of employment with a single high-priority district.

~~(ii)-(B)~~ A teacher is not entitled to receive a new teacher bonus from any high-priority district other than the high-priority district that first employed the teacher and paid the teacher a new teacher bonus;

~~(C)-(4)~~ "Previous year" means the school year immediately preceding the present school year;

~~(D)-(5)~~ "Retention bonus" means an incentive bonus provided under subdivision (b)(4) or subdivision (b)(5) of this section; and

~~(E)-(i)-(6)~~(A) "Teacher" means a ~~certified~~ licensed classroom teacher who spends seventy percent (70%) of his or her time working directly with students in a classroom setting teaching all grade-level or subject-matter appropriate classes.

~~(ii)-(B)~~ "Teacher" includes a guidance counselor and librarians counselor or librarian.

~~(2) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules to determine high priority districts of the state.~~

(b) ~~Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year and each school year thereafter,~~ At the end of the school year and upon completion of a licensed teacher's contracted teaching obligations, a teacher ~~licensed by the state board who enters into a teaching contract and who completes the entire current school year teaching in a high-priority district shall at the end of the school year and upon completion of his or her contracted teaching obligations be~~ is entitled to receive in addition to all other contracted salary and benefits:

(1) For a newly hired teacher who has not previously taught in a high-priority district, a ~~one (1) time~~ one-time signing bonus of ~~four thousand dollars (\$4,000)~~ five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for the first year of service in the high-priority district, to be paid upon completion of the full year of teaching;

(2) For a newly hired teacher who meets the requirements of subdivision (b)(1) of this section, who continues to teach in the same high-priority district, and who completes the second full year of contracted teaching obligations, a new teacher bonus ~~in the amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000)~~ four thousand dollars (\$4,000) in addition to all other contracted salary and benefits;

(3) For a teacher who meets the requirements of subdivisions (b)(1) and (2) of this section, who continues to teach in the same high-priority district, and who completes a third year of contracted teaching obligations, a new teacher bonus of ~~three thousand dollars (\$3,000)~~ four thousand dollars (\$4,000) in addition to all other contracted salary and benefits;

(4) For a teacher who meets the requirements of subdivisions (b)(1)-(3) of this section, who enters his or her fourth or subsequent year of service with the same high-priority district or begins employment with a high-priority district other than the high-priority district where he or she was employed at the time he or she received a new teacher bonus under subdivisions (b)(1)-(3) of this section, a retention bonus ~~in the amount of two thousand dollars (\$2,000)~~ three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for the fourth and each subsequent complete year of service in the high-priority district, to be paid at the end of the school year after completing all contractual obligations; and

(5) For a teacher employed in a high-priority district who does not meet the requirements of subdivisions (b)(1)-(3) of this section, a retention bonus ~~in the amount of two thousand dollars (\$2,000)~~ three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for each complete year of service in the high-priority district, to be paid at the end of the school year after completing all contractual obligations.

(c)(1) ~~No~~ A teacher shall not be entitled to a bonus provided under this section unless the teacher has fulfilled his or her contractual obligations for the current school year.

(2) The superintendent of the high-priority district where the teacher is employed shall certify in writing to the department that the teacher has completed all contractual obligations for the school year.

~~(d) Any bonus pay awarded under this section to eligible full-time equivalent teachers who do not work the entire school year shall be prorated based on the portion of the school year that the eligible teacher was employed by the high priority district.~~

~~(e)~~(d) The department shall:

(1) Monitor the implementation of the incentive program established by this section;

(2) Collect data to be used to evaluate the incentive program's effectiveness; and

(3) Promulgate any necessary rules to administer the requirements of this teacher recruitment and retention program.

SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that there are school districts in economically depressed and low property-wealth areas of the state that face difficulties competing with surrounding, geographically close school districts with regard to teacher salaries and that this makes it difficult for districts in such economically depressed and low property-wealth areas to recruit and retain qualified teachers; that this act will provide assistance to those high-priority districts to assist them in recruiting and retaining such teachers; and that this act is immediately necessary to provide that assistance for the 2009-2010 school year. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or

(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.