



TEACHER EXCELLENCE FUND

House Bill 4387 and 4388

Let's provide teachers with more opportunities for growth and advancement — and the chance to make six figure salaries

Summary

This bill will create more options for teachers to earn more money based on excellent performance and leadership, improving teacher retention and attracting top talent to Oklahoma.

Why We Need It

Oklahoma is experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers. The current teacher pay structure in our state doesn't provide much opportunity for upward mobility. This prescriptive teacher pay scale either doesn't motivate people to keep teaching for more than a few years, or it diverts potential teachers from the profession entirely. We need a way to recognize the hard work of teachers and improve retention.

Right now, there are few options for teachers to improve their pay. Some can become a coach or lead an extracurricular to receive a stipend, but that can mean hours of extra work for already overworked teachers. Teachers are often faced with the choice between receiving a relatively flat pay rate for much of their career, or leaving classroom teaching to become a principal or superintendent to make more money. Very few careers have such limited options for promotions and pay increases. We need to treat teachers like the professionals they are.

The Solution

This bill creates an optional program for districts that includes a ladder of pay incentives for outstanding Oklahoma teachers, tied to dependable and sustainable funding from the Oklahoma Lottery Trust Fund. Districts can reward their top teachers with Advanced, Lead and Master teaching certificates that come with added pay and opportunities to mentor their peers. This solution is necessary to keep, grow and attract excellent teachers to our workforce for Oklahoma students.

Teachers who receive one of the three certificates will have the opportunity to incorporate mentorship time into their work day, providing additional learning and advancement to encourage career growth. These mentorship duties are critical to ensuring that we lift all teachers up and give them the opportunity to learn from their peers excelling in the classroom.

Why This Matters

We know the key to giving our kids the best education possible is giving every student a high quality teacher in their classroom. We must find innovative ways to keep and attract top teaching talent. Excellent teachers deserve pay befitting their hard work, because they're key to their students' success.

Bill Details

- This bill will provide districts with an optional program that includes a teacher pay and promotion scale with three tiers to reward excellent teachers
- Teachers who are leaders in their industry can receive a state match to local funds up to \$40,000 in additional pay, leveraging dependable and sustainable funds from the Oklahoma Lottery Trust Fund
- In districts that opt into the program, excellent teachers could exceed \$100,000 annual pay in combined district pay and state match
- Annual matched funding minimums for each participating teacher will follow advanced, lead and master quantifiers: Advanced - Minimum of \$3,000, Lead - Minimum of \$5,000, Master - Minimum of \$10,000 and maximum of \$40,000
- The mentorship requirement also follows these quantifiers, with participating teachers required to spend a minimum percentage of their time mentoring others: Advanced - 10%, Lead - 25%, Master - 50%
- If a teacher works in a Title I school or a rural school (fewer than 1,000 students) they get an additional award on top of the salary tied to the career ladder designation: Advanced - \$1,500, Lead - \$2,500, Master - \$5,000. This is intended to entice our best teachers to work in schools where it is most difficult to attract and retain high quality teachers
- Districts will have the flexibility to create their own plan for designating advanced, lead and master certificates, as long as a student performance component and teacher observations are considered in some way
- Districts can designate teachers for Advanced, Lead or Master certificates twice each year, once prior to the school year, and a second time prior to the second semester
- Teachers statewide who receive these designations will be placed into professional development cohorts and provided additional training opportunities from the State Department of Education
- The State Department of Education will annually report the school districts participating in the program, the number of advanced, lead, and master certificates awarded, and the total amount in state match funding that was distributed to teachers