

HCS HB 1447 -- TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

SPONSOR: Lewis (6)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1447.

The current minimum teacher salary is \$25,000 and for those teachers with a Master's Degree and 10 years of experience the minimum is \$33,000. This bill raises the minimum in the 2025-26 school year to \$38,000. For a teacher with a Master's Degree and 10 years of experience the minimum is raised to \$44,000 with increases each year until the 2027-28 school year when the minimum shall be \$46,000.

Beginning in the 2028-29 school year and in all subsequent years the minimum teacher salary base will be adjusted annually by a calculated percentage increase in inflation, not to exceed 3% as outlined in the bill. The State Board of Education shall publish the calculated minimum salaries beginning in February, 2026.

The bill creates a "Teacher Baseline Salary Grant Fund" to assist school districts with a grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to increase the districts minimum teacher salary to the required level. The grant will be necessary funds used to increase the districts minimum salary.

The bill authorizes the State Board for Education to grant an additional teaching certificate in a specific content or subject area to already certificated teachers based upon successfully completing the state-approved teacher evaluation system comprised of seven walk-through evaluations, two formative evaluations, and one summative evaluation, a recommendation from the school district, and the completion of a background check..

The bill removes the requirement that salary schedules adopted by a district's board of education apply to all teachers in the district and allows school boards to include differentiated placement of teachers on the salary schedule for hard-to-staff subject areas and hard-to-staff schools. Districts may annually review and modify hard-to-staff subject areas and schools, as defined in the bill, and are prohibited from placement of any teacher on a schedule that would result in a salary demotion.

The bill modifies the "Missouri Professional Teacher and Administrator Act" by removing the requirement that prospective teacher education students pass an entry-level test with a satisfactory rating before being admitted into a university or college teaching program.

The bill modifies the "career plan or program" requirement that qualifying career ladder responsibilities and volunteer effort occur after school hours by clarifying that they must be outside of duties that require a teaching certificate and includes teacher mentorship to the suggested options. The bill also exempts military members and the member's spouse from the two year residency requirement if such individual has experience in another state..

The bill modifies the existing "Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship Program" by changing the name to the "Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program". The corresponding state treasury fund is also renamed accordingly. Additional provisions of the existing program are modified including increasing the maximum number of two-year scholarships from 200 in the 2025 academic year to 600 such scholarships by the 2030-31 school term.

Scholarships for up to 100% of eligible tuition and fees are to be awarded to "eligible students" as defined in the bill for up to two years. Students must agree to teach in "hard-to-staff schools" or "hard-to-staff subject areas" for two years for every year the scholarship is received.

The repayment rate of the scholarships for a failure to fulfill the agreement is set forth in the bill as 1% over the prevailing prime rate in effect on January 1st of the year the student is ineligible, with annual adjustments.

The bill includes provisions from HB 2092 and HB 1986 (2024)

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the Blue Ribbon Commission pointed out that for past several years Missouri teachers have been leaving the profession or are not entering the profession in large enough numbers to sustain the numbers of teachers needed to effectively teach. Missouri salaries are some of the lowest in the surrounding area and in the nation. Teachers have the biggest impact on student learning and investments in this resource need to be made.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Lewis; Aligned; Missouri Retired Teachers Association; Missouri State Teachers Association; Perry Gorrell, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Quality Schools Coalition; Missouri School Boards Association; and Missouri NEA.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say local school boards and local communities do not spend the local effort raised the same way, with some districts focused on teacher salaries while others spend it in other areas. This state approach may not solve the teacher salary issue if local districts do not act accordingly.

Testifying in person on the bill was John T. Grady.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.