

HB 1447 -- TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

SPONSOR: Lewis (6)

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 2029-30 school year when the minimum shall be \$48,000.

Beginning in the 2026-27 school year and in all subsequent years the minimum teacher salary base will be adjusted annually by a calculated percentage increase in inflation, as outlined in the bill, and in similar manner beginning in the 2030-31 school year for any teacher with a master's degree and at least 10 years of experience. The State Board of Education shall publish the calculated minimum salaries beginning January 1, 2026.

The bill creates a "Teacher Baseline Salary Grant Fund" to be used for the 2025-26, 2026-27, and the 2027-28 school years 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 would provide 70% of the necessary funds to increase the districts minimum salary, and the grant fund and grants will expire on December 31, 2028 (Section 163.172 RSMo).

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 (Section 168.110).

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 (Section 168.400).

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 (Section 168.500).

This 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 100 in the 2025 academic year to 300 such scholarships by the 2030-31 school term. Scholarships for 100% of eligible tuition and fees are to be awarded to "eligible students" as defined in the bill who 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 (Section 173.232).

This bill is similar to HCS HB 497 (2023).