

Paid Student Teaching

Eliminating a financial barrier to ensure candidates complete their educator preparation programs

WHY IS THIS INITIATIVE NEEDED?

Student teaching is critical to the public education workforce pipeline, ensuring new groups of highly trained educators begin their careers serving the learning needs of Oklahoma students each year. In the past decade, the numbers of those seeking traditional college pathways in education have dwindled. Compensating qualified student teachers in a paid internship format is one way to reverse this trend.

HOW WILL THIS INITIATIVE WORK?

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) will invest federal relief dollars to compensate qualified candidates for their work as student teachers. The program will fund Oklahoma student teachers in school year 2021-22 through school year 2023-24.

Through a partnership with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and the OSDE, payments of up to **\$3,250** will be provided to each student teacher approved by Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs). For the first payment, the OSDE will transfer applicable funds to the OSRHE, which will distribute \$1,625 to the student teacher by the first week of student teaching. The second \$1,625 payment will be distributed to the public school district that hires the student teacher, and the district will then pay the student teacher directly.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH BASE FOR THIS INITIATIVE?

- A [Southern Regional Education Board \(SREB\) Education Supply and Demand report](#) identifies compensating student teachers as a strong teacher recruitment strategy.
- [This OACTE brief](#) references the positive effects on student achievement when students are taught by fully prepared teachers.
- [Teacher Turnover: Why It Matters and What We Can Do About It](#) reports that U.S. turnover rates are highest in the South, and alternatively certified teachers are 25% more likely to leave than those who have gone through traditional teacher preparation.

WHAT IS THE OSDE'S TOTAL INVESTMENT IN THIS INITIATIVE?

The OSDE will use approximately **\$12,675,000** of its federal COVID-19 relief funding to pay all qualified student teachers through the 2023-24 school year. (Figures are based on an estimated 1,300 student teachers annually paid \$3,250 after taxes. Actual number of student teachers and of teachers earning both payments may vary.)

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What determines a student teacher's eligibility for this initiative?

Educator Preparation Providers determine their student teachers' eligibility for the first payment by approving and assigning them to student teach in a school district. To be eligible to receive the second payment, the EPP must verify completion of student teaching, and the accredited Oklahoma public school district that hires the student teacher must verify employment.

How can interested student teachers participate?

There is no application process for student teachers. The EPP will submit a list of eligible student teachers to the OSDE and OSRHE.

Which educator preparation programs in the state are participating in this initiative?

All [23 Educator Preparation Providers](#) are eligible to participate.

How will this initiative impact Oklahoma students?

[Research](#) shows that teachers are the most critical factor in promoting student achievement. Oklahoma students deserve access to well-prepared, effective teachers. Student teachers who have completed comprehensive preparation programs that include skills for instructional best practices, academic assessment and intervention strategies, and culturally responsible student engagement methods will serve this role.

Can student teachers assigned to an out-of-state school receive payment?

Yes. Student teachers assigned to out-of-state schools will receive the initial incentive payment and be eligible for the second payment upon verification of completion and verification of employment in an Oklahoma accredited public school district.

Can a student teacher from another state assigned to student teach in Oklahoma receive payment?

No. Only student teachers who are enrolled in programs at the Oklahoma college and university EPPs in the above link are eligible.

Is there a deadline for receipt of the second payment?

Yes. The student teacher has up to one year from the date of student teaching completion to verify employment.

Is verification of employment at a private school in Oklahoma allowable for the second payment?

No. Student teachers must provide documentation of hiring in an accredited Oklahoma public school in order to be eligible for the completion payment.

For questions about the Paid Student Teaching initiative, please contact Tiffany Neill, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, at Tiffany.Neill@sde.ok.gov.

For questions about an Oklahoma Educator Preparation Provider, please contact the program directly.

For information about federal relief funding, please see the [American Rescue Plan FAQs](#).