



# OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Interim Study: Secretary Ryan Walters  
Topic: Teacher Career Ladder  
October 20, 2021



- Current AP History and Government teacher for McAlester Public Schools
- Taught AP courses, special ed courses, AVID courses, and a variety of other history courses
- Oklahoma State Teacher of the Year finalist
- Executive Director of Every Kid Counts Oklahoma
- Secretary of Education

# Ryan Walters

# Every Kid Counts Oklahoma

Every Kid Counts Oklahoma (EKCO) is an education reform organization that seeks to organize and empower teachers, parents, business and community leaders to achieve a common goal: to ensure all Oklahoma students have access to a quality education.

EKCO is uniquely positioned to effect change in the Oklahoma education system by encouraging partnerships with existing education-centered organizations across the state, and by providing a platform for leaders to have their voices heard for education reform in Oklahoma.

The organization is specifically **positioned to empower teachers to innovate in their classrooms** and respond to the needs of their students. We need to work to provide professional development programs that will benefit them, their classrooms and careers.



# Senate Bill 980

## **TEACHER CAREER LADDER/TIERED CERTIFICATIONS**

### **Bill History & Overview:**

In 2018, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed Senate Bill 980 into law, which granted Oklahoma school districts to grant Lead and Master teacher certificates beginning in the 2021-22 school year.

### **What the Law Does:**

This law provides teachers an opportunity to advance within the teaching profession by creating a teaching certificate ladder.

Under SB 980, a multi-tiered teacher certification system creates two additional levels of certification: lead and master certifications.

# Senate Bill 980

## TEACHER CAREER LADDER/TIERED CERTIFICATIONS

### How the Law Works:

#### Lead Certificate

- Requires at least 5 years teaching experience
- Allows for (but does not require) a teacher to spend 25% of their time outside the classroom to mentor other teachers
- Requires a “highly effective” or a “superior” rating on the state’s Teacher Leader Effectiveness evaluation
- Provides a \$3,000 salary increase

#### Master Certificate

- Requires at least 7 years teaching experience
- Allows for (but does not require) a teacher to spend 50% of their time outside the classroom to mentor other teachers
- Requires a “highly effective” rating and National Board Certification, or a “superior” rating on the state’s Teacher Leader Effectiveness evaluation
- Provides a \$5,000 salary increase

# Potential Impact of a Teacher Career Ladder

- Strengthens Oklahoma's teaching profession by giving our best teachers the opportunity for greater responsibility, autonomy and pay.
- Creates a statewide certification structure that acknowledges the state's best teachers across all of Oklahoma's classrooms.
- Provides a path for differentiated pay in the teaching profession.
- Mirrors other states, like Ohio and Iowa, that offer a successful career ladder for teachers.
- Keeps our best teachers in the classroom instead of losing them to administration roles.

# Why is a Career Ladder Needed?

- Nearly every other 21st Century profession provides growth opportunities for workers by rewarding quality work and dedication to the job.
- Many teachers are leaving the profession. Teachers who stay in the profession either plateau by staying in the classroom at the same level for years, or they choose to leave the classroom to become a school administrator or instructional coach.
- Even if a teacher does not want to leave teaching, he/she may do so in order to fulfill their desire for an increase in pay, responsibility, and autonomy. Meaningful advancement opportunities for teachers who want to stay in the classroom and become leaders will help stem our state's teacher shortage and keep our best teachers in our classrooms.

# Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment

- The Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) was created in 2019 by the Texas Legislature as part of House Bill 3 to provide a realistic pathway for top teachers to earn six-figure salaries and to help attract and retain highly effective teachers at traditionally hard-to-staff schools.
- TIA allotment funds help Texas school systems reward, retain, and recruit highly effective teachers.
- The funding formula prioritizes high needs and rural campuses.
- Districts can now create compensation plans based on teacher effectiveness and student equity.
- This new model creates a path for outstanding teachers to earn a six-figure salary—thus, reducing the desire for highly effective teachers to leave the classroom.
- Similar to Oklahoma’s teacher career ladder created with SB 980, the TIA creates new teacher designations - Recognized, Exemplary, and Mastery.
  - These teacher designations generate additional teacher-focused allotment funding for districts to reward and retain their most effective teachers.



# What's Next

To ensure the success and future of education in the state of Oklahoma, we must empower our teachers and give them opportunities for career advancement and more pay.

We may need to update Oklahoma's teacher career ladder language to ensure it reflects the needs and skill sets of today's teachers and provides enticing incentives to local districts with state funds to help pay our best teachers more.



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