

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1477

5 By: Representative Barker
6 By: Senator J. Bryant
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ARKANSAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR
10 ACT; TO ALLOW THE GOVERNING BODY OF AN OPEN-
11 ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TO SUBMIT AN
12 APPLICANT FOR CONSIDERATION FOR THE ARKANSAS TEACHER
13 OF THE YEAR; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
14

Subtitle

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16
17 TO ALLOW THE GOVERNING BODY OF AN OPEN-
18 ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TO
19 SUBMIT AN APPLICANT FOR CONSIDERATION
20 FOR THE ARKANSAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR.
21

22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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24 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-17-2503(b)-(d), concerning the
25 application process for the Arkansas Teacher of the Year Act, are amended to
26 read as follows:

27 (b) The process shall allow ~~that~~ each Arkansas school district board
28 of directors ~~may~~ and each governing body of an open-enrollment public charter
29 school to submit a single applicant for the Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

30 (c) ~~The applicants~~ An applicant shall be ~~reduced to sixteen (16)~~
31 ~~finalists representing one (1) applicant for each of the fifteen (15)~~
32 ~~education service areas and one (1) applicant for school districts in Pulaski~~
33 ~~County~~ submitted to the division by a school district board of directors or
34 governing body of an open-enrollment public charter school under subsection
35 (b) of this section no later than April 1 of the year in which the Arkansas
36 Teacher of the Year is selected.



1 (d) ~~In~~ By submitting an application for Arkansas Teacher of the Year,
2 a school district or governing body of an open-enrollment public charter
3 school agrees that if its applicant is selected, the school district or open-
4 enrollment public charter school shall place that teacher on paid
5 administrative leave for the school year immediately following his or her
6 selection, as provided in § 6-17-2504.

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8 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-17-2503(f), concerning reimbursement to a
9 school district that has a teacher placed on paid administrative leave under
10 the Arkansas Teacher of the Year Act, is amended to read as follows:

11 (f) During the school year in which a school district's or an open-
12 enrollment public charter school's Arkansas Teacher of the Year is on paid
13 administrative leave, the division shall reimburse the school district or
14 open-enrollment public charter school as provided in § 6-17-2505.

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16 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-17-2504 is amended to read as follows:

17 6-17-2504. School district and open-enrollment public charter school
18 responsibility.

19 (a) Each school district and open-enrollment public charter school
20 whose applicant is selected as Arkansas Teacher of the Year shall place that
21 teacher on paid administrative leave for the school year immediately
22 following the teacher's selection as Arkansas Teacher of the Year for the
23 time period that the teacher actually serves as the Arkansas Teacher of the
24 Year.

25 (b) The teacher shall be entitled to return to his or her former
26 employment with the school district or open-enrollment public charter school
27 for the school year following the paid administrative leave provisions of
28 this section.

29 (c) The school district or open-enrollment public charter school shall
30 be responsible for providing a replacement teacher or restructuring class
31 loads during the school year in which the teacher selected as Arkansas
32 Teacher of the Year is on administrative leave.

33 (d) A school district or open-enrollment public charter school that
34 employs a substitute teacher to replace the Arkansas Teacher of the Year
35 shall not be subject to any earning limitations set in place by law or the
36 Arkansas Teacher Retirement System.

1 (e) Each school district or open-enrollment public charter school
 2 classroom teacher contract shall reflect the administrative leave provisions
 3 of this section for any teacher selected as Arkansas Teacher of the Year.
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5 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-2505(a), concerning reimbursement to a
 6 public school district that has a teacher who is on paid administrative leave
 7 under the Arkansas Teacher of the Year Act, is amended to read as follows:

8 (a) During the school year in which a school district's or an open-
 9 enrollment public charter school's Arkansas Teacher of the Year is on paid
 10 administrative leave, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education
 11 shall reimburse the school district or open-enrollment public charter school
 12 for:

13 (1) The teacher's salary and benefits; and

14 (2)(A) Incidental expenses incurred by the teacher as a result
 15 of his or her participation in the Arkansas Teacher of the Year Program.

16 (B) All incidental expenses shall be approved by the
 17 division.
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