HB 2525

AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE EXPERIENCED TEACHER RETENTION PILOT PROGRAM;
APPROPRIATING MONIES.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)
Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

Section 1. Experienced teacher retention pilot program; requirements; impact study; report; delayed repeal

A. The department of education shall conduct a five-year experienced teacher retention pilot program. Persons who are selected by the department to participate in the pilot program are eligible to receive a discount of seventy-five percent on tuition at universities under the jurisdiction of the Arizona board of regents for the duration of the pilot program. The department shall establish application procedures for persons who wish to apply to participate in the pilot program. The department, in collaboration with the Arizona board of regents, shall limit the number of persons who are selected to participate in the pilot program to ensure that the cost of the pilot program does not exceed the amount appropriated. The department shall select applicants to participate in the pilot program on a first-come, first-served basis.

B. The following persons are eligible to participate in the pilot program:

1. A certificated teacher who has been employed at one or more school districts or charter schools in this state for a total of at least ten years.
2. The spouse of a person who meets the criteria specified in paragraph 1 of this subsection.
3. The dependent of a person who meets the criteria specified in paragraph 1 of this subsection.
4. A certificated teacher who has been employed at one or more school districts or charter schools for at least three years but fewer than ten years. A certificated teacher who meets the criterion specified in this paragraph may use the discount specified in this section only to obtain one or more graduate degrees from a college of education and shall sign a contract with the department of education to continue to teach in a public school in this state for at least two years after obtaining the graduate degree.

C. If a program participant receives discounted tuition pursuant to subsection B of this section and fails to fulfill the service requirement under the contract, or if the program participant's teacher certificate is revoked by the state board of education pursuant to title 15, Arizona Revised Statutes, the program participant shall repay the amount of the discounted tuition to the department of education.

D. Each university that enrolls a program participant shall submit an invoice to the department of education to reimburse the university for the amount of the discounted tuition for that participant. The department, after verifying the amount of the invoice and the person's participation in the pilot program, shall distribute to that university an amount to reimburse the university for the amount of the discounted tuition.
tuition for that program participant from monies appropriated for this
purpose.

E. On or before December 31, 2021, the department of education
shall issue a request for proposals to contract with one or more qualified
persons or entities to study the impact of the experienced teacher
retention pilot program on the teacher shortage in this state and the
effectiveness of the pilot program. The study shall examine and evaluate
the impact of the pilot program in fiscal years 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and
2024-2025. On or before December 31, 2025, the persons or entities
selected by the department shall submit a report that summarizes their
findings and conclusions to the governor, the superintendent of public
instruction, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
representatives. The superintendent of public instruction shall provide a
copy of this report to the secretary of state.

F. The department of education may adopt policies and procedures to
carry out the purposes of the pilot program.

G. This section is repealed from and after February 15, 2026.

Sec. 2. Appropriations; department of education; experienced
teacher retention pilot program; impact study;
 exemption
A. The following sums are appropriated from the state general fund
in the following fiscal years to the department of education for the costs
of the experienced teacher retention pilot program:
1. In fiscal year 2019-2020, $2,500,000.
2. In fiscal year 2020-2021, $5,000,000.
3. In fiscal year 2021-2022, $7,500,000.
4. In fiscal year 2022-2023, $10,000,000.
5. In fiscal year 2023-2024, $10,000,000.

B. The sum of $2,000,000 is appropriated from the state general
fund in fiscal year 2022-2023 to the department of education for
distribution to the persons or entities that are selected to study the
impact of the experienced teacher retention pilot program as prescribed in
this act.

C. The department may retain up to two percent of the monies
appropriated each fiscal year pursuant to subsection A of this section to
administer the pilot program.

D. The appropriations made in subsections A and B of this section
are exempt from the provisions of section 35-190, Arizona Revised
Statutes, relating to lapsing of appropriations, except that all monies
remaining unencumbered or unexpended on July 1, 2024 revert to the state
general fund.