

REFERENCE TITLE: Arizona teachers academy; community colleges

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-seventh Legislature
First Regular Session
2025

SB 1247

Introduced by
Senators Farnsworth: Bravo, Miranda

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 15-1655, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO SCHOOL
EMPLOYEE TRAINING.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 15-1655, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
3 read:

4 15-1655. Arizona teachers academy; tuition and fees
5 scholarships; fund; reporting requirements;
6 definitions

7 A. Eligible postsecondary institutions shall implement an Arizona
8 teachers academy to incentivize students to enter the teaching profession
9 and to commit to teach in Arizona public schools or for or in schools that
10 serve primarily public school students with disabilities, which are
11 considered public schools for the purposes of this section. The Arizona
12 board of regents, in consultation with eligible postsecondary
13 institutions, shall develop and implement centralized administrative
14 processes for the academy, including:

- 15 1. A marketing and promotion plan to recruit students for the
16 academy.
- 17 2. Data collection and reporting.
- 18 3. Tracking postgraduation service requirements.
- 19 4. Coordinating induction services.
- 20 5. Distributing monies in the Arizona teachers academy fund between
21 eligible postsecondary institutions.
- 22 6. Collecting reimbursement from individuals who fail to meet
23 service obligations.

24 B. The Arizona teachers academy may include new or existing teacher
25 preparation program pathways that are student-focused and that employ
26 proven, research-based models of best practices already being implemented.
27 Each eligible postsecondary institution may develop a portfolio of teacher
28 preparation programs to offer as part of the academy. Each eligible
29 postsecondary institution that admits students to the Arizona teachers
30 academy may give priority to senior and junior students but may not
31 exclude sophomore and ~~freshmen~~ FRESHMAN students. Programs offered as
32 part of the academy shall include accelerated models for:

- 33 1. High-demand teacher specializations, including special
34 education, science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- 35 2. Critical need areas, including low-income public schools, public
36 schools located on Indian reservations, rural public schools and schools
37 that serve primarily public school students with disabilities.
- 38 3. Individuals seeking postbaccalaureate coursework that results in
39 professional certification.
- 40 4. Teachers who are currently teaching a dual enrollment course to
41 satisfy the requirements for teaching a dual enrollment course adopted by
42 a higher learning commission that accredits degree-granting postsecondary
43 educational institutions in the north central region, including this
44 state.

1 5. Students in noneducation programs to complete one or more
2 teacher preparation courses to prepare the student to receive a teaching
3 certification following graduation.

4 C. Each eligible postsecondary institution shall develop formalized
5 partnerships with public schools in this state to build commitments for
6 teacher employment on completion of the Arizona teachers academy. The
7 targeted deployment of teachers who have completed the academy shall be
8 based on the needs of each school system and the community that is being
9 served as well as the individual skills of each teacher.

10 D. Each eligible postsecondary institution shall provide to each
11 student who is enrolled in the Arizona teachers academy an annual
12 scholarship up to the actual cost of tuition and fees for a maximum of two
13 academic years or four semesters for graduate university students, up to
14 the actual cost of tuition and fees for a maximum of four academic years
15 or eight semesters for undergraduate university students, up to the actual
16 cost of tuition and fees for a maximum of two academic years or four
17 semesters for community college students for tuition and fees associated
18 with the student's program of study, up to the actual cost of obtaining
19 national board certification and renewal, and up to the actual cost of
20 obtaining a teaching certificate including the actual cost of the exam,
21 after all other financial gifts, aid or grants received by that student or
22 teacher. Scholarships under this subsection are subject to all of the
23 following:

24 1. If the student does not successfully complete the academic year
25 in good academic standing, the student shall reimburse the Arizona board
26 of regents for the total amount of the scholarship for tuition and fees
27 the student received for that year.

28 2. For each academic year that the student successfully completes
29 and for which the student receives a scholarship for all tuition and fees,
30 the student must agree to teach for one full school year in a public
31 school in this state. For students who are teaching and receiving the
32 scholarship concurrently, the commitment period begins after graduation
33 from the Arizona teachers academy. For teachers WHO ARE seeking a
34 national board certification, the teaching commitment is one additional
35 year after completing the requirements of the national board certification
36 program.

37 3. If a student enrolls in a summer term, that term may not be
38 included in the calculation of the student's postgraduation public service
39 commitment.

40 4. If the scholarship does not cover remaining tuition and fee
41 costs after other aid received, the eligible postsecondary institution may
42 not charge students the remaining difference. If the scholarship amount
43 exceeds tuition and fee costs at an eligible postsecondary institution,
44 the ELIGIBLE POSTSECONDARY institution may use the remaining amount to
45 support Arizona teachers academy costs.

1 5. If the student does not fulfill the student's obligation to
2 teach in a public school, the student must reimburse the Arizona board of
3 regents for the proportional amount of the scholarship for tuition and
4 fees that the student received that corresponds to the number of school
5 years the student agreed to teach but did not teach in a public school in
6 this state.

7 6. If the student is physically or mentally unable to fulfill the
8 requirements of the Arizona teachers academy, the Arizona board of regents
9 shall establish a process for assessing the student's ability to repay the
10 financial assistance received and shall determine any terms of repayment.

11 7. The Arizona board of regents shall establish a process for
12 deferring service or repayment based on factors adopted by the board.

13 E. The Arizona teachers academy fund is established consisting of
14 monies deposited pursuant to section 15-1281, subsection D, paragraph 5
15 and legislative appropriations made for the purpose of administering the
16 Arizona teachers academy. Monies in the fund are continuously
17 appropriated and are exempt from the provisions of section 35-190 relating
18 to ~~the~~ lapsing of appropriations. The Arizona board of regents shall
19 administer the fund and shall establish criteria for distributing monies
20 in the fund to eligible postsecondary institutions each fiscal year to
21 fund the costs of the academy. Monies in the fund may be used only for:

22 1. Reimbursing Arizona teachers academy scholarships that cover the
23 balance of tuition and fees for undergraduate, graduate and
24 postbaccalaureate students **WHO ARE** enrolled in the Arizona teachers
25 academy after all other gifts and aid received.

26 2. Support for teachers who are currently employed in a public
27 school in this state and who are seeking a national board certification.

28 3. Induction services for Arizona teachers academy graduates.

29 4. Implementing a marketing and promotion plan to recruit and
30 retain students in the Arizona teachers academy with particular emphasis
31 on ensuring **THAT** participants reflect the diversity of ~~the~~ **THIS** state's
32 student population and administering the Arizona teachers academy. Annual
33 expenditures for marketing, promoting and administering the Arizona
34 teachers academy may not exceed three percent of the monies in the fund
35 each fiscal year.

36 F. Monies remaining in the Arizona teachers academy fund at the end
37 of each fiscal year may be used by eligible postsecondary institutions for
38 Arizona teachers academy costs in the next fiscal year.

39 G. On or before March 1, ~~2020 and~~ each year ~~thereafter~~, the Arizona
40 board of regents shall report to the joint legislative budget committee
41 and the governor's office of strategic planning and budgeting on all of
42 the following:

43 1. The total number of students enrolled in the Arizona teachers
44 academy by eligible postsecondary institution in the current academic
45 year.

1 2. The number of Arizona teachers academy graduates receiving
2 induction services in the current academic year.

3 3. The estimated amount of monies committed from the Arizona
4 teachers academy fund in the current fiscal year.

5 H. On or before September 1 each year, the Arizona board of regents
6 shall report to the governor, the president of the senate and the speaker
7 of the house of representatives, and shall submit a copy to the secretary
8 of state, on all of the following:

9 1. The total number of students enrolled in the Arizona teachers
10 academy at each eligible postsecondary institution by year of college
11 enrollment and the number of teachers receiving a scholarship through the
12 Arizona teachers academy for national board certification.

13 2. The percentage of students who completed each year of the
14 academy and who plan to continue to the subsequent year, delineated by
15 each teacher preparation program offered by each eligible postsecondary
16 institution as part of the Arizona teachers academy.

17 3. The number of teachers who completed a program of study through
18 the Arizona teachers academy by each eligible postsecondary institution.

19 4. The number of teachers currently teaching in a public school in
20 this state as part of an agreement for receiving an Arizona teachers
21 academy scholarship.

22 5. The number of graduates receiving induction services.

23 6. The number of students who have defaulted on their obligation
24 and who are in repayment agreements.

25 7. The number of students who have deferred repayment agreements.

26 8. The number of students who have completed repayment agreements.

27 9. The methodology for distributing any monies appropriated for the
28 Arizona teachers academy to each eligible postsecondary institution and
29 the amounts distributed to each.

30 10. The amount of unused monies in the Arizona teachers academy
31 fund from the prior fiscal year.

32 I. A college in this state that is owned, operated or chartered by
33 a qualifying Indian tribe on its own Indian reservation and that offers
34 baccalaureate teacher education programs may participate in the Arizona
35 teachers academy and receive monies from the Arizona teachers academy fund
36 established by this section.

37 J. For the purposes of this section:

38 1. "Eligible postsecondary ~~institutions~~ INSTITUTION" means:
39 ~~universities~~

40 (a) A UNIVERSITY under the jurisdiction of the Arizona board of
41 regents. , -

42 (b) A community ~~colleges~~ COLLEGE in this state. ~~that offer~~
43 ~~postbaccalaureate programs that lead to teacher certification and that~~
44 ~~have entered into an agreement with the Arizona board of regents relative~~
45 ~~to these postbaccalaureate programs, and colleges~~

1 (c) A COLLEGE described in subsection I of this section if the
2 college opts to participate in the Arizona teachers academy under
3 subsection I of this section.

4 2. "School that serves primarily public school students with
5 disabilities" means a school in which more than seventy-five percent of
6 the students enrolled in the school are public school students who are
7 placed at the school according to an agreement with a school, a charter
8 school or the Arizona state schools for the deaf and the blind.

9 3. "Tuition and fees" means tuition, mandatory fees and program
10 fees that are associated with a program in the Arizona teachers academy
11 leading to teacher certification and that are charged by an eligible
12 postsecondary institution.