

**Arkansas Department of Education**  
**Rules Governing Incentives for Teacher Recruitment**  
**And Retention in High Priority Districts with**  
**An Average Daily Membership of 1,000 or Fewer**  
July 2005

**1.00 Regulatory Authority**

- 1.01 These rules shall be known as the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Incentives for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in High Priority Districts with an Average Daily Membership of 1,000 or Fewer.
- 1.02 These rules are enacted pursuant to the Arkansas State Board of Education's authority under A.C.A. §§ 6-11-105 and 6-17-811.

**2.00 Purpose**

The purpose of these rules is to establish the procedures to provide incentives for teacher recruitment and retention in high priority districts.

**3.00 Definitions**

Unless otherwise specifically stated herein, the term:

- 3.01 Bonus Pay Period - Means the three-year period in which an eligible employee receives a signing or a retention bonus.
- 3.02 Department - Means the Arkansas Department of Education.
- 3.03 High Priority District - Means a district of one thousand (1000) or fewer students in which eighty percent (80%) or more of public school students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program under the National School Lunch Act and have a three-quarter average daily membership of one thousand (1,000) or fewer for the 2003-2004 school year.
- 3.04 Previous year - Means the school year immediately preceding the current school year.
- 3.05 Retention Bonus - Means beginning in the 2004-2005 school year a one time \$2,000 bonus paid per year for three consecutive years to certified teachers employed by a high priority district during the school year, and who were employed at the high priority district during the previous school year and who have not received or are currently receiving a signing bonus, pursuant to these rules, from the school district.

- 3.06 Signing Bonus - Means beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, a one time \$4,000 bonus awarded to a teacher not employed by a high priority district for the previous school year, who signs a new contract to teach in a high priority district for the current school year and who has not received a prior signing or retention bonus, pursuant to these rules, from the school district.
- 3.07 Teacher - Means those certified personnel who spend seventy percent (70%) of their time working directly with students in a classroom setting teaching all grade-level or subject matter appropriate classes, including guidance counselors and librarians.

#### **4.00 Incentives**

- 4.01 Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, a certified teacher licensed by the State Board of Education and teaching in a high-priority district shall receive incentive pay.
- 4.02 Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year teachers who sign their initial contract with a high priority district shall receive a one-time signing bonus of \$4,000 at the beginning of the school year.
  - 4.02.1 For each of the next two years, that teacher referred to in Section 4.02 shall receive a \$3,000 bonus at the beginning of the school year while still employed at the same high priority district.
  - 4.02.2 If the teacher has received bonus pay under Section 4.02 of this rule and voluntarily leaves the high priority district before the end of the three-year bonus pay period, the teacher shall pay back the amount of the bonus received in the previous year.
  - 4.02.3 If the teacher voluntarily leaves the high priority district during the school year, the teacher shall pay back the previous year's bonus and the current year's bonus.
  - 4.02.4 If a teacher has received a signing bonus, and the teacher is reassigned involuntarily to a position that is not eligible for signing bonus pay or that teacher is dismissed involuntarily by a high priority district, the teacher shall not be required to repay the applicable signing bonus.
  - 4.02.5 If a teacher qualified to receive a signing bonus leaves the high priority district due to a serious medical emergency, the

teacher shall not be required to repay the signing bonus provided documentation from a licensed physician validating the need to terminate employment due to medical reasons is filed with the district.

- 4.03 Beginning in 2004-2005, all currently employed certified teachers who have been employed by the high priority district in the previous school year and who are not receiving a signing bonus, shall receive a \$2,000 retention bonus at the beginning of each of the next two subsequent school years as long as the teacher continues to be employed by the high priority district.
  - 4.03.1 If a currently employed teacher receives a retention bonus under Section 4.03 of this rule and then voluntarily leaves the high priority district before the end of the bonus pay period, the teacher shall pay back the amount of the retention bonus received in the previous year.
  - 4.03.2 If a currently employed teacher voluntarily leaves the high priority district during the school year, that teacher shall pay back the previous year's bonus and the current year's bonus.
  - 4.03.3 If a teacher has received a retention bonus and that teacher is reassigned involuntarily to a position that is not eligible for retention bonus pay or a teacher is dismissed involuntarily by a high priority district, the teacher shall not be required to repay the applicable retention bonus pay.
  - 4.03.4 If a teacher qualified to receive retention bonus pay leaves the high priority district due to a serious medical emergency, the teacher shall not be required to repay the retention bonus provided documentation from a licensed physician validating the need to terminate employment due to medical reasons is filed with the district.
- 4.04 No teacher may receive both a signing bonus and a retention bonus in the same year.
- 4.05 Any bonus pay awarded to an eligible, full time equivalent teacher who does not work the entire school year shall be pro-rated based on the portion of the school year that the eligible teacher was employed by the high priority district.

## 5.00 Documentation

- 5.01 Beginning in 2004-2005, the Department shall issue by September 1 of each year a list of the high priority districts in which eighty (80) percent (80%) or more of the public school students are eligible for free and reduced price meals.
- 5.02 Beginning in 2004-2005, the Free and Reduced Price Meal calculation shall be based on the list of eligible students in a district as verified by the Child Nutrition Unit of the Department based on the October 1 list of eligibles for grades K-12 for the previous school year.
- 5.03 The determination of eligibility for high priority district designation in annexed or consolidated districts is made based on the combining of the enrollment, average daily membership, and free and reduced price meal calculations for the two or more districts that were annexed or consolidated.
- 5.04 Beginning in 2004-2005, high priority districts shall notify the Department on forms provided by the Department, and identify all eligible teachers employed at the high priority district for the current school year. The district shall list teachers who are not employed by the high priority district during the previous school year and teachers employed the previous school year who continue to be employed for the current school year.
- 5.05 Upon receipt of the form from each high priority district, the Department shall distribute the funds to the districts who will distribute the appropriate bonuses to the teachers employed by the high priority districts.
- 5.06 Districts will be responsible for the payment of all matching benefit payments.

## 6.00 Sanctions

- 6.01 It shall be the responsibility of the high priority district to monitor the incentive bonus distribution in their district.
- 6.02 If a teacher receiving either a signing or a retention bonus voluntarily leaves the high priority district before the end of the three-year bonus pay period or if the teacher voluntarily leaves the high priority district during the school year, the district shall require the teacher to pay back the appropriate bonus amount.

- 6.03 Upon receipt of the bonus payback from the teacher, the district shall forward the payment(s) to the Finance Section at the Department.