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Alabama launches historic Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) Act

Ambitious legislation, signed into law by Governor Kay Ivey, offers enhanced pay structure to attract math and science teachers from across the Southeast

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (May 11, 2021) — With the stroke of a pen at the Alabama State Capitol, Governor Kay Ivey on Thursday, May 6, signed into law the Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) Act, legislation designed to fill each and every Alabama school with credentialed math and science teachers in grades 6-12. Under this law, highly qualified middle and high school math and science teachers could earn up to an additional \$20,000 annually.

“The quality of education in this state, particularly in rural, hard-to-staff areas, has to be solved to properly prepare our children for their futures in an ever-increasing STEM-based economy,” said Governor Ivey, who is herself a former teacher. “With TEAMS, we are placing emphasis on attracting both in-state and regional teachers in key subjects to move the needle in Alabama school systems.”

State Superintendent of Education and former middle school science teacher Dr. Eric G. Mackey said TEAMS will prove to be a powerful recruitment tool beyond state lines.

“With the focus on a technology-based economy for the future of Alabama, this new pay scale provides a unique recruiting opportunity for Alabama’s schools,” said Mackey. “Here in Alabama, middle and high school math and science teachers can potentially earn a salary that surpasses any grade 6-12 teacher salary in the Southeast.”

Each district may employ one TEAMS math and one TEAMS science teacher for every 105 students in grades 6-12 — equating to roughly 7,000 teachers statewide. Prospective teachers can apply to their district for a TEAMS position if they:

- Hold a valid Alabama professional educator certificate or alternate certificate in middle level math or science OR secondary math, science or computer science;
- Teach full-time approved math and/or science courses in grades 6-12 with the appropriate certificate endorsements; and
- Currently hold or plan to obtain an Advanced Credential from either the National Institute for STEM Education or National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification in math or science.

If the eligible teacher does not hold, but is planning to obtain the specified Advanced Credentials, the teacher is eligible to apply for a one-year Preliminary Teams Contract that is renewable for a limited time to obtain the advanced credentials.

An annual supplement of \$5,000 will be paid to those teaching in Alabama State Department of Education-identified hard-to-staff schools, and teachers on the TEAMS pay remain eligible for already existing state National Board Certified Teachers stipends.

Both House and Senate sponsors and supporters herald TEAMS as a step in the right direction for Alabama's future and its ability to train an ever-evolving, technology-forward workforce.

"The TEAMS Act is an aggressive and innovative investment to attract and reward highly credentialed math and science teachers in public schools," Rep. Alan Baker (R-Brewton) said.

"Alabama is working towards evolving itself as a more capable 21st Century state with a STEM-trained workforce set up for success at jobs of the future," Rep. Bill Poole (R-Tuscaloosa) said. "We are committed to ensuring we find teachers to properly train our children, no matter where they are geographically or economically – and we are working aggressively to make that happen."

"In Alabama, our state takes a lot of pride in being No. 1 in college football, yet we have settled far too long with at or near the bottom in math and science scores," said Sen. Donnie Chesteen (R-Geneva). "The TEAMS Act will not only allow Alabama to attract more math and science teachers and enroll current teachers into the TEAMS program, but also to prepare our state to remain competitive in the recruitment of STEM jobs. I look forward to seeing the positive improvements this will provide students in the future."

Those interested in Alabama's Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) Program can learn more about applying at weteachalabama.com/teams.

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