



SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7A.4: Consolidated Teacher Bonus Program

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 7A.4

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Section 7A.4 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) codifies a consolidated teacher bonus program to reward teacher performance and encourage student learning and improvement. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must administer bonuses to qualifying teachers in January of each year, based on data from the prior school year.

Advanced Course Bonuses: Qualifying advanced course teachers will receive a bonus of \$50 for each student who meets the required score on the relevant advanced course examination.

CTE Bonuses: Qualifying CTE teachers who provide instruction in a course leading to attainment of an industry certification or credential will receive a bonus of either \$25 or \$50 for each student who attains the certification or credential. The amount per student of the bonus will be determined by the Department of Commerce's assigned value ranking for each industry certification and credential based on academic rigor and employment value.

Statewide Growth Bonuses: Qualifying teachers who meet statewide growth requirements will receive bonuses as follows:

- \$5 million will be distributed equally among teachers who were in the top 25% of teachers in the State according to the EVAAS student growth index score for third grade reading.
- Teachers in the top 25% of teachers in the State according to the EVAAS student growth index score for fourth or fifth grade reading receive \$2,000.
- Teachers in the top 25% of teachers in the State according to the EVAAS student growth index score for fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade mathematics receive \$2,000.

Local Growth Bonuses: Qualifying teachers who meet local growth requirements will receive bonuses as follows:

- \$5 million will be distributed equally among teachers who were in the top 25% of teachers in the local school administrative unit according to the EVAAS student growth index score for third grade reading.
- Teachers in the top 25% of teachers in the local school administrative unit according to the EVAAS student growth index score for fourth or fifth grade reading receive \$2,000.
- Teachers in the top 25% of teachers in the local school administrative unit according to the EVAAS student growth index score for fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade mathematics receive \$2,000.
- Teachers with three or fewer total teachers in that teacher's grade level who had an EVAAS student growth index of exceeded expected growth in either (i) third grade reading, (ii) fourth or fifth grade reading, or (iii) fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade mathematics.

Other Requirements: All of the following additional requirements apply to the bonuses:

- The following bonuses cannot exceed \$3,500 in any given year:
 - Advanced course bonus.
 - CTE bonus.

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Senate Bill 257

Page 2

- Statewide growth bonus for teachers in the top 25% in 3rd grade reading.
 - Local growth bonus for teachers in the top 25% in 3rd grade reading.
- A teacher can receive both a statewide growth bonus and a local growth bonus based on third grade reading EVAAS results, but the combined total of both bonuses cannot exceed \$7,000 in any given year.
- A teacher can receive both a statewide growth bonus and a local growth bonus based on fourth or fifth grade reading EVAAS results, but cannot receive more than two of these bonuses in any given school year.
- A teacher can receive both a statewide growth bonus and a local growth bonus based on fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade mathematics EVAAS results, but cannot receive more than two of these bonuses in any given school year.

Additionally, the bonuses are not considered compensation under the Retirement System for Teachers and State Employees.

Study and Report: The State Board of Education (SBE) must study the effect of the bonus program on teacher performance and retention. By March 15 of each year, the SBE must report to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, and the Fiscal Research Division on the results of the study and the amount of bonuses awarded.

This section became effective July 1, 2026, and applies beginning with bonuses awarded in January of 2027 based on data from the 2025-2026 school year.