

Senator Harriss Passes Bill To Address Teacher Shortage

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SPRINGFIELD - State Senator Erica Harriss (56th-Glen Carbon) has passed a bill that could help alleviate the teacher shortage across the state by providing flexibility and incentives for established educators.

“Our teachers are incredibly important and with the teacher shortage still a persistent and serious issue across our state, we must look at collaborative ways to address the issue,” said Senator Harriss.

[House Bill 1297](#) would extend the current statute in the pension code to allow teachers the ability to buy up to two years of service credit at a private or parochial school from the Teachers Retirement System.

“This bill is a good step in allowing teachers the flexibility to move from the private sector into public schools and buy back their time in the retirement system,” said Senator Harriss. “With the current law set to expire June 30th, this legislation is merely an extension of a sunset now set for 2028 if signed into law.”

To qualify, the teacher must have been a teacher in a private school recognized by the state board of education, complete 10 years of TRS service, be a certified teacher when the service was rendered and apply in writing by the June 30th deadline.

According to a recent [report](#) by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents, 79 percent of school districts are faced with a teacher shortage.

House Bill 1297 passed the Senate on May 4, and the House by Representative Amy Elik (111th-Alton) on March 23. It now heads to the Governor's desk for consideration.