

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R834 SLO-D

S.B. 83
By: Shapleigh
Education
2/11/2005
As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

As Texas moves towards a knowledge-based economy, our students must be competitive with other states. The most important piece to meeting this challenge is through highly trained, well qualified teachers. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification, developed by teachers, and for teachers, is a symbol of professional teaching excellence. This certification program establishes advanced standards for experienced teachers that tests their knowledge with other highly trained teachers throughout the nation. An independent, multi-year study of more than 600,000 students in North Carolina found that students whose teachers were nationally certified increased their scores an average of seven percent on their year-end math and reading tests.

Currently, of the approximately 289,000 teachers in the state, Texas only has 144 with National Board Certification, which falls far short of Florida's 4,938 nationally certified teachers and California's 2,644 nationally certified teachers. As proposed, S.B. 83, The 21st Century Educational Excellence Act, establishes a statewide program to assist Texas teachers achieve National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 (Section 21.658, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. Sets forth findings regarding national teacher certification.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Subchapter N, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER N. 21ST CENTURY EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM FOR NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

Sec. 21.651. DEFINITIONS. Defines "board" and "program."

Sec. 21.652. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM. Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish the 21st Century Education Excellence Program for National Certification (program) to encourage teachers in critical subject areas to obtain national certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (board).

Sec. 21.653. ELIGIBILITY. (a) Provides that a teacher employed by a school district is eligible to participate in the program if the teacher is certified by the State Board for Educator Certification in bilingual education, mathematics, science, special education, elementary reading, or another teaching field identified by the commissioner of education (commissioner) as experiencing a critical shortage of teachers in the state in the year which the teacher applies to participate in the program.

(b) Prohibits a teacher employed by an open-enrollment charter school from participating in the program.

Sec. 21.654. APPLICATION; SELECTION OF APPLICANTS. (a) Requires TEA to select not more than 500 eligible teachers to participate in the program each year.

(b) Requires TEA to adopt application procedures and selection criteria for the program.

Sec. 21.655. PAYMENT OF CERTIFICATION COSTS. (a) Authorizes a teacher who participates in the program to receive an amount equal to the certification fee charged by the board.

(b) Requires TEA to pay the teacher two-thirds the cost of certification from funds appropriated for that purpose. Requires the school district that employs the teacher to pay the remaining one-third of the certification cost.

(c) Requires a teacher who does not complete all the requirements for assessment by the board to reimburse the agency and school district the full amount of payments received under Subsection (b). Provides that this subsection does not apply to a teacher who completes all of the requirements for assessment by the board but who is not certified by the board.

Sec. 21.656. STIPEND. Authorizes a school district to pay a teacher who participates in the program and obtains board certification an annual stipend. Authorizes TEA, from funds appropriated for the purpose, to match the amount the district pays the teacher in an amount not greater than \$2,000.

Sec. 21.657. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN. Requires TEA to establish a statewide staff development plan that uses skills and knowledge of teachers who have obtained board certification.

Sec. 21.658. RULES. Requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement this subchapter.

SECTION 3. Requires TEA and the commissioner to implement the program, as added by this Act, as soon as possible after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.