

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 84
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The link between student achievement and teacher quality is well documented. In fact, teacher inputs such as academic degrees and academics are highly predictive of student outcome. Meanwhile, school districts across the state are experiencing teacher shortages in a number of areas, including mathematics, science, bilingual education, early education, and special education. Those effective teachers who are capable of inspiring significantly greater learning gains for students in critical teaching areas should be rewarded for those skills. Stipends for highly qualified teachers in critical shortage areas would provide an incentive for beginning candidates to choose one of these areas.

As proposed, S.B. 84, The Texas Teacher Excellence Act of 2005, seeks to attract the most qualified teachers to the areas of the state experiencing the greatest need by offering a \$5,000 bonus to first time teachers with an outstanding academic record who commit to teach in critical shortage areas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 (Section 21.415, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Provides that this Act may be cited as the "Texas Teacher Excellence Act of 2005" and sets forth findings and goals regarding student achievement and teacher quality.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter I, Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Section 21.415, as follows:

Sec. 21.415. BONUS FOR CERTAIN NEW CLASSROOM TEACHERS. (a) Authorizes a person employed as a classroom teacher for the first time to receive a bonus, subject to available funds, of \$5,000, if the teacher meets certain requirements. Sets forth said requirements.

(b) Requires a bonus under this section to be paid using funds appropriated for that purpose and distributed by the commissioner of education (commissioner) to certain school districts dealing with a critical shortage of teachers. Provides that a person is to be entitled to a bonus under this section only to the extent sufficient state funds are appropriated for that purpose. Requires the commissioner, upon insufficient appropriation of state funds, to reduce the amount paid for the bonuses to these districts, and requires the district to proportionately reduce the amount of money each individual may receive as a bonus under this section, so that each individual receives the same amount of money.

(c) Provides that a decision of the commissioner concerning the amount of money to which a school district is entitled under this section is final and may not be appealed. Requires each district, in the manner and at the time prescribed by the commissioner, to provide to the commissioner acceptable proof of the employment of a person entitled to a bonus under this section.

(d) Authorizes the commissioner to audit the expenditure of money appropriated for purposes under this section. Requires a school district's use of the money appropriated for purposes of this section to be verified as a part of the district audit under Section 44.008 (Annual Report; Audit).

(e) Provides that a bonus received by a teacher under this section is not considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary under Section 21.402 (Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff).

(f) Authorizes the commissioner, in addition to rules adopted under Subsection (a), to adopt any other rules necessary to administer this section.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 822.201(b), Government Code, to redefine "salary and wages."

SECTION 4. Makes application of this Act prospective to the 2005-2006 school year.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2005.