

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1310
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Education
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Engrossed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Continuing education for classroom teachers is a means of improving teaching skills and the caliber of classroom instruction. Teachers often do not have the time or resources to engage in continuing education opportunities. H.B. 1310 establishes the Texas Teachers' Excellence Program to provide state-supported incentives to encourage teachers to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Subchapter M, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER M. TEXAS TEACHERS' EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Sec. 21.601. DEFINITIONS. Defines "certification," "certification examination," and "program."

Sec. 21.602. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM. Requires the State Board for Educator Certification to establish the Texas Teachers' Excellence Program to encourage teachers to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Sets forth provisions relating to the program.

Sec. 21.603. ELIGIBILITY. Provides that a teacher is eligible for financial assistance under Section 21.605 if the teacher meets certain requirements.

Sec. 21.604. SELECTION COMMITTEE. (a) Requires that if the selection committee appointed under this section receives not more than 100 applications in a fiscal year from eligible applicants for financial assistance under Section 21.605, the committee accept the application of each eligible applicant to receive financial assistance under Section 21.605. Requires the committee if it receives more than 100 applications in a fiscal year from eligible applicants and accepting the applications of all of the eligible applicants would result in the expenditure of an amount of money greater than the amount available for that fiscal year for financial awards under Section 21.605, to review all of the applications and, from among the applicants, select not more than 100 eligible applicants to receive financial assistance under Section 21.605.

(b) Sets forth the composition of the committee.

(c) Requires at least one member appointed by the State Board for Educator Certification and at least one member appointed by the State Board of Education to be

a teacher who is certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

(d) Provides that members serve staggered terms of six years, with the terms of as near as possible to one-third of the members expiring on February 1 of each even-numbered year.

(e) Requires the commissioner to appoint the presiding officer from among the members of the committee.

(f) Requires the committee to meet at least once each year in Austin on a date determined by the presiding officer and may hold other meetings as necessary at the call of the presiding officer or of at least two-thirds of the members of the committee.

(g) Provides that a member of the committee is not entitled to compensation. Entitles a member of the committee to reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses incurred in conducting the business of the committee.

Sec. 21.605. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE; LEAVE. (a) Requires the State Board for Educator Certification, to the extent authorized under Subsection (b), to pay the application fee for the certification examination for each teacher selected by the selection committee.

(b) Requires the board to establish the amount of a payment under Subsection (a), except that the amount may not exceed certain amounts.

(c) Entitles a teacher selected by the committee to three days of leave to prepare the application for certification in addition to any other leave to which a teacher is entitled under this code or district policy.

Sec. 21.606. REIMBURSEMENT. (a) Requires a teacher who receives financial assistance under Section 21.605 but fails to complete training for the certification examination, to take the certification examination, or to teach at least one school year in a public school after earning certification to reimburse the State Board for Educator Certification for the money received under Section 21.605 unless the board determines that the teacher is not required to pay reimbursement because the teacher's failure is due to extenuating circumstances. Authorizes a teacher to appeal the board's decision to the selection committee in the manner and within the period prescribed by the selection committee.

(b) Provides that a teacher who completes training for certification but fails to perform satisfactorily on the certification examination is not required to pay reimbursement under this section.

Sec. 21.607. SALARY STIPENDS. Sets forth provisions relating to salary stipends.

Sec. 21.608. FUNDING. Sets forth provisions relating to funding.

Sec. 21.609. EVALUATION OF TEACHERS HOLDING NATIONAL CERTIFICATION. (a) Requires the commissioner to develop an assessment system for evaluating teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Requires the system to meet certain requirements.

(b) Requires that, using the assessment system developed under Subsection (a), the commissioner evaluate teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards who receive a stipend under Section 21.607. Requires a district to renew a teacher's stipend every three years if the teacher meets the criteria for stipend renewal established by the commissioner.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 822.201(b), Government Code, to redefine “salary and wages.”

SECTION 3. (a) Provides that initial appointees to the selection committee under Section 21.604, Education Code, as added by this Act, take office February 1, 2002.

(b) Requires the State Board for Educator Certification to designate one of its initial appointees to the selection committee to serve a term expiring February 1, 2006, and one of its initial appointees to serve a term expiring February 1, 2008. Requires the State Board of Education to designate one of its initial appointees to the selection committee to serve a term expiring February 1, 2006, and one of its initial appointees to serve a term expiring February 1, 2008. Provides that the initial appointee of the commissioner of education serves a term expiring February 1, 2004. Provides that, thereafter, members of the committee serve terms of six years in accordance with Section 21.604, Education Code, as added by this Act.

(c) Provides that Section 21.607(a), Education Code, as added by this Act, does not entitle a classroom teacher to a salary stipend for a year before the effective date of this Act during which the teacher held National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2001.