

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
78R728 CAS-F

S.B. 32
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Education
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, Texas does not have an excellence program to encourage teachers to obtain national certification and further their education. As proposed, S.B. 32 creates the Texas Teachers' Excellence Program to provide state-supported incentives to encourage teachers to become certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, providing an annual \$4,000 stipend to a teacher who obtains national certification plus an additional annual \$2,000 stipend if the teacher mentors other teachers on any subject.

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 N, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER N. TEXAS TEACHERS' EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Sec. 21.651. DEFINITIONS. Defines "certification," "certification examination," and "program."

Sec. 21.652. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM. Requires the State Board for Educator Certification (board) to establish the Texas Teachers' Excellence Program (program) to encourage teachers to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Requires the board to provide certain services to teachers under the program. Requires school districts to pay stipends to teachers who hold certification.

Sec. 21.653. ELIGIBILITY. Provides that a teacher is eligible for financial assistance under Section 21.655 if the teacher meets certain requirements.

Sec. 21.654. APPLICANT REVIEW COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the applicant review committee each year to review the applications of all teachers who apply to participate in the program and, from among the applicants, select not more than 500 eligible teachers to receive financial assistance under Section 21.655.

(b) Provides that the committee is composed of 15 members and establishes the distribution of the membership.

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

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

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

(f) Prohibits a member of the committee from being compensated, except for reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses incurred in conducting the business of the committee.

Sec. 21.655. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE; LEAVE. (a) Requires the board to pay the application fee for the certification examination for each teacher selected by the applicant review committee and to provide to each of those teachers a scholarship of \$500 to pay other expenses of applying for certification.

(b) Provides that a teacher selected by the committee is entitled 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. 21.656. REIMBURSEMENT. (a) Requires a teacher who receives financial assistance under Section 21.655 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 in this state after earning certification to reimburse the board for the money received under Section 21.655 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 commissioner in the manner and within the period prescribed by the commissioner.

(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. 21.657. SALARY STIPENDS. Requires the district to pay stipends to teachers who meet certain qualifications in addition to the minimum salary to which a teacher is entitled under Section 21.402 and any additional salary amount the school district employing the teacher pays.

Sec. 21.658. FUNDING. Requires the program, including salary stipends under Section 21.657, to be funded using state money appropriated for that purpose and gifts, grants, and donations received for that purpose.

SECTION 2. Provides that if the Act of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes takes effect, Section 822.201(b), Government Code, as amended by Chapters 118, 834, and 1301, Acts of the 77th Legislature, Regular Session, 2001 is reenacted and amended to make conforming changes.

SECTION 3. Provides for the appointment and term of initial and subsequent members of the application review committee.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2003.