

By: Shapleigh

S.B. No. 20

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to national certification of certain public school
3 teachers.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. (a) The legislature
6 finds that if Texas is to have world-class schools, then Texas must
7 first have a world-class teaching force.

8 (b) The legislature also finds that certification by the
9 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, developed by
10 teachers for teachers:

11 (1) is a symbol of and tool for professional teaching
12 excellence;

13 (2) establishes advanced standards for an experienced
14 teacher by testing the teacher's knowledge against standards of
15 other highly trained teachers throughout the country; and

16 (3) ensures that teachers meet high professional
17 standards of commitment and competence.

18 (c) The legislature also finds that an independent,
19 multi-year study of more than 600,000 students in North Carolina
20 found that the students of teachers who were nationally certified
21 experienced an increase in reading and math assessment instrument
22 scores by an average of seven percent.

23 (d) The legislature also finds that of the approximately
24 289,000 teachers in Texas, only 144 of those teachers are

1 nationally certified, compared with 4,938 nationally certified
2 teachers in Florida and 2,644 nationally certified teachers in
3 California.

4 (e) The legislature also finds that in order for Texas
5 students to compete with students from other states, as Texas moves
6 toward a knowledge-based economy, Texas must encourage teachers to
7 pursue national certification. The 21st Century Educational
8 Excellence Program for National Certification serves that goal by
9 establishing a statewide program to assist Texas teachers in
10 achieving national certification.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding
12 Subchapter N to read as follows:

13 SUBCHAPTER N. 21ST CENTURY EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

14 FOR NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

15 Sec. 21.651. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

16 (1) "Board" means the National Board for Professional
17 Teaching Standards.

18 (2) "Program" means the 21st Century Educational
19 Excellence Program for National Certification.

20 Sec. 21.652. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM. The agency shall
21 establish the 21st Century Educational Excellence Program for
22 National Certification to encourage teachers in critical subject
23 areas to obtain national certification by the board.

24 Sec. 21.653. ELIGIBILITY. (a) A teacher employed by a
25 school district is eligible for participation in the program if the
26 teacher is certified by the State Board for Educator Certification
27 in bilingual education, mathematics, science, special education,

1 elementary reading, or another teaching field identified by the
2 commissioner as experiencing a critical shortage of teachers in
3 this state in the year in which the teacher applies to participate
4 in the program.

5 (b) A teacher employed by an open-enrollment charter school
6 is not eligible for participation in the program.

7 Sec. 21.654. APPLICATION; SELECTION OF APPLICANTS. (a)
8 The agency shall select not more than 500 eligible teachers to
9 participate in the program each year.

10 (b) The agency shall adopt:

11 (1) procedures for submitting an application to
12 participate in the program; and

13 (2) criteria for the selection of teachers to
14 participate in the program.

15 Sec. 21.655. PAYMENT OF CERTIFICATION COSTS. (a) A teacher
16 who participates in the program is entitled to receive an amount
17 equal to the certification fee charged by the board.

18 (b) From funds appropriated for the purpose, the agency
19 shall pay the teacher an amount equal to two-thirds of the cost of
20 certification. The school district that employs the teacher shall
21 pay the remaining one-third of the cost of certification.

22 (c) A teacher who does not complete all of the requirements
23 for assessment by the board shall reimburse the agency and school
24 district the full amount of the payments received under Subsection
25 (b). This subsection does not apply to a teacher who completes all
26 of the requirements for assessment by the board but who is not
27 certified by the board.

1 Sec. 21.656. STIPEND. A school district may pay a teacher
2 who participates in the program and obtains board certification a
3 stipend. From funds appropriated for the purpose, the agency may
4 match the amount the district pays the teacher in an amount not
5 greater than \$2,000.

6 Sec. 21.657. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The agency shall
7 establish a statewide staff development plan that uses the skills
8 and knowledge of teachers who have obtained board certification.

9 Sec. 21.658. RULES. The commissioner shall adopt rules as
10 necessary to implement this subchapter.

11 SECTION 3. The Texas Education Agency and the commissioner
12 of education shall implement the 21st Century Educational
13 Excellence Program for National Certification, as required by
14 Subchapter N, Chapter 21, Education Code, as added by this Act, as
15 soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

16 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
20 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the last day of the
21 legislative session.