

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 411
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Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND

Texas suffers from a widely recognized teacher shortage which is especially acute in the area of science. Teachers could be recruited and the performance of Texas students on assessment exams could be improved with increased resources for science instruction and continuing education of science teachers.

PURPOSE

C.S.H.B. 411 creates science training programs for teachers, tutoring programs for students, and a grant program for master science teachers.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 (Section 21.413, Education Code) and SECTION 4 (Section 29.089, Education Code) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 411 amends the Education Code to require the State Board for Educator Certification to establish a master science teacher certificate (certificate) and sets forth eligibility requirements for a teacher to receive a certificate. The bill requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish a master science teacher grant program to encourage teachers to become certified as master science teachers and to work with students and other teachers to improve student science performance. From funds appropriated for that purpose, the commissioner is required to make grants, in the amount of \$5,000, to school districts to pay stipends to selected certified master science teachers who teach at high-need campuses. The bill requires the commissioner, by rule, to annually identify and rank, in order of greatest need, each high-need campus.

The bill authorizes a school district to apply to the commissioner for grants to pay stipends to certified master science teachers. The bill sets forth the criteria for evaluating and approving applications. The bill also sets forth provisions regarding the application of districts for the grants, and the distribution, funding, use, and auditing of the grants. The bill requires the commissioner to develop and make available training material and resources for school districts to use in assisting science teachers in developing expertise in teaching science.

The bill authorizes a school district to provide an intensive after-school or summer program to provide science instruction to students who are performing poorly in science. The bill sets forth provisions regulating the manner in which a district must administer such a program. The bill requires the commissioner to, by rule, establish procedures regarding the application of school districts for funding, adopt guidelines for the selection of districts to receive funding, require the administration of assessment exams by the districts, and disseminate information regarding successful instructional methods. The bill provides that an after-school

or summer program shall be paid with funds appropriated for that purpose.

The bill reenacts and amends Section 822.201(b), Government Code, relating to the definition of salary and wages. The State Board for Educator Certification shall propose rules establishing requirements and prescribing an examination for master science teacher certification by January 1, 2005 (SECTION 6).

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 411 modifies the original version by removing the provisions relating to the development of professional development institutes for teachers who provide instruction in science. C.S.H.B. 411 modifies the original by removing provisions relating assessment instruments that a school district may use to diagnose student science skills.

C.S.H.B. 411 modifies the original by adding that training materials developed by the commissioner for assisting science teachers in developing expertise in teaching science must address instructional approaches designed to reduce identified disparities in student science performance.