

By: Shapleigh

S.B. No. 30

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to national certification of public school teachers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(d) The legislature also finds that of the approximately 289,000 teachers in Texas, only 144 of those teachers are nationally certified, compared with 4,938 nationally certified

1 teachers in Florida and 2,644 nationally certified teachers in
2 California.

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

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

12 SUBCHAPTER N. 21ST CENTURY EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM
13 FOR NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

14 Sec. 21.651. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

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

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

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

23 Sec. 21.653. APPLICATION; SELECTION OF APPLICANTS. (a)
24 The agency shall select not more than 500 school district or
25 open-enrollment charter school teachers to participate in the
26 program each year.

27 (b) In selecting teachers to participate in the program, the

1 agency shall give preference to a teacher who is certified by the
2 State Board for Educator Certification in bilingual education,
3 mathematics, science, special education, elementary reading, or
4 another teaching field identified by the commissioner as
5 experiencing a critical shortage of teachers in this state in the
6 year in which the teacher applies to participate in the program.

7 (c) The agency shall adopt:

8 (1) procedures for submitting an application to
9 participate in the program; and

10 (2) criteria for the selection of teachers to
11 participate in the program.

12 Sec. 21.654. PAYMENT OF CERTIFICATION COSTS. (a) A teacher
13 who participates in the program is entitled to receive funds as
14 provided by this section to pay costs of certification charged by
15 the board, including application fees.

16 (b) The agency shall pay the teacher an amount not to exceed
17 85 percent of the cost of certification using funds appropriated
18 for that purpose. To the extent such funding is available, the
19 agency shall pay the state's share under this subsection of the cost
20 of certification using federal funds obtained by the State Board
21 for Educator Certification in an amount not to exceed one-half of
22 the cost of certification.

23 (c) The agency and the State Board for Educator
24 Certification shall enter into an agreement that specifies the
25 manner in which the State Board for Educator Certification will
26 transfer federal funds described by Subsection (b) to the agency.

27 (d) The remaining cost of certification shall be paid by:

1 (1) the school district or open-enrollment charter
2 school that employs the teacher, if the district or school agrees to
3 pay the cost; or

4 (2) the teacher seeking certification.

5 (e) The shares to be paid by the agency under Subsection (b)
6 and the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or teacher
7 under Subsection (d) must be the same for each teacher
8 participating in the program in any particular year.

9 (f) A teacher who does not complete all of the requirements
10 for assessment by the board shall reimburse the agency and the
11 school district or open-enrollment charter school the full amount
12 of the payments received under Subsections (b) and (d)(1). This
13 subsection does not apply to a teacher who completes all of the
14 requirements for assessment by the board but who is not certified by
15 the board.

16 Sec. 21.655. STIPEND. A school district or open-enrollment
17 charter school may pay a teacher who participates in the program and
18 obtains board certification an annual stipend. From funds
19 appropriated for the purpose, the agency may match the amount the
20 district or school pays the teacher in an amount not greater than
21 \$2,000.

22 Sec. 21.656. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The agency shall
23 establish a statewide staff development plan that uses the skills
24 and knowledge of teachers who have obtained board certification.

25 Sec. 21.657. RULES. The commissioner shall adopt rules as
26 necessary to implement this subchapter.

27 SECTION 3. The Texas Education Agency and the commissioner

1 of education shall implement the 21st Century Educational
2 Excellence Program for National Certification, as required by
3 Subchapter N, Chapter 21, Education Code, as added by this Act, as
4 soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

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