

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2657  
By: Giddings  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

School districts with a predominately economically disadvantaged and academically at-risk student population report a significantly higher teacher turnover rate compared to other school districts. Additionally, these school districts struggle to provide incentives for teachers to remain in the district as well as to maintain a full staff on all campuses.

Because the students on these campuses require and deserve quality teachers, this bill establishes a pilot program to pay salary supplements to teachers who commit to teach in a qualifying district for at least three years.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Commissioner of Education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

This bill directs the Commissioner of Education to establish a pilot project in high-need public school districts selected by the commissioner to pay salary supplements to teachers who commit to teach for at least three years in a qualifying district at any campus considered academically unacceptable under Section 39.132, Education Code.

The bill provides that the commissioner shall select school districts where at least 70% of enrolled students are educationally disadvantaged, that have a substantial number of campuses considered academically unacceptable under Section 39.132, and that have high teacher turnover rates.

The bill sets forth a funding mechanism for grants awarded under the pilot program, including specification of the powers and duties of the commissioner, and establishes certain limitations on the manner in which grant funds may be utilized, including that the grant may only be used for the purposes of a salary supplement, and that eligible teachers must be at any academically unacceptable campus within the district.

The bill specifies that one-third of the salary supplement is payable as signing bonus, that the remaining two thirds of the salary supplement are payable only at the end of the three year commitment, and that a teacher who does not fulfill the commitment is not entitled to any portion of the remaining two-thirds of the salary supplement.

The bill makes the provisions of Chapter 21, Education Code, regarding resignation applicable to a teacher employed under a contract who participates in the pilot program in the same manner as they are applicable to a teacher employed under a contract to teach in any district.

The bill provides that a grant received under the pilot program is in addition to any funding the district receives under Chapter 42, Education Code, that a district to which Chapter 41 applies is entitled to such a grant, and that an open enrollment charter school is not eligible for such a grant. The bill further describes the mechanism and timing of grant distributions, and limitations on the extent of district entitlement to a grant and teacher entitlement to a salary supplement, and procedures to be followed in the event of insufficient appropriations.

The bill provides a mechanism for verification of appropriate certification of teachers receiving the salary supplement, and for audits of money appropriated for the pilot program.

The bill provides that a salary supplement received under the program will not be considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary under Section 21.402 of the Education Code.

The bill provides that the commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to implement the program.

The bill provides that the Texas Education Agency shall report to the Legislature on the program, and specifies the contents of the report and the due dates for an interim and final report.

The bill provides that the section of law establishing the pilot program expires January 1, 2011.

The provisions of the bill apply beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2007.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

One of the eligibility criteria for district participation in the program differs in the original and the substitute. The original provides that a qualifying school district must "have a substantial geographical area with a low-income population" whereas the substitute provides that "at least 70% of the number of students enrolled in the district are educationally disadvantaged."

The substitute provides that a teacher receiving the supplement must commit to teach for at least three years at a campus considered academically unacceptable. The original does not include this provision.

The original bill provides that the salary supplement is payable only at the end of the three-year commitment. The substitute provides that one-third of the total salary supplement amount will be paid as a sign-on bonus, and the remaining two-thirds at the end of the three year commitment. In the original bill, a teacher who does not fulfill the commitment is not entitled to any portion of the salary supplement. The substitute provides that teacher who does not fulfill the commitment is not entitled to any portion of the remaining two-thirds salary supplement.

The substitute adds a provision making Chapter 21, Education Code, regarding resignation applicable to a teacher employed under a contract who participates in the pilot program in the same manner as applicable to a teacher employed under a contract to teach in any district.