

By: Alonzo

H.B. No. 990

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a program to provide financial incentives to students who agree to teach bilingual education, English as a second language, or Spanish in certain public schools.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter LL to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER LL. FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PREPARE TEACHERS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, AND SPANISH

Sec. 61.9851. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM.

(a) The board shall establish a program to provide financial incentives such as tuition assistance or student loan repayment to:

(1) assist persons in obtaining certification to teach bilingual education, English as a second language, or Spanish in a public elementary or secondary school in this state; and

(2) facilitate the employment of those persons by a public elementary or secondary school in this state that has a shortage of teachers certified to teach in those fields.

(b) In administering the program, the board shall give priority to awarding financial incentives to those eligible persons who demonstrate the greatest financial need.

Sec. 61.9852. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive financial incentives under this subchapter, a person must:

(1) apply to the board in the form and manner

1 prescribed by board rule;

2 (2) have completed at least 60 semester credit hours
3 of course work toward an associate's degree at a public junior
4 college or a junior college accredited by a recognized accrediting
5 agency;

6 (3) be admitted into an educator preparation program
7 at an institution of higher education or at a private or independent
8 institution of higher education that prepares students for
9 certification to teach bilingual education, English as a second
10 language, or Spanish;

11 (4) enter into an agreement with the board as provided
12 by Section 61.9853; and

13 (5) satisfy any other criteria jointly prescribed by
14 the board and the State Board for Educator Certification.

15 Sec. 61.9853. AGREEMENT. To qualify for financial
16 incentives under this subchapter, a person must enter into a
17 written agreement with the board as provided by this section. The
18 agreement must require the person to:

19 (1) obtain, within the period prescribed by board
20 rule, certification to teach bilingual education, English as a
21 second language, or Spanish in a public elementary or secondary
22 school in this state;

23 (2) accept, during the first school year that begins
24 after the date the person becomes certified as provided by
25 Subdivision (1), an offer of full-time employment to teach
26 bilingual education, English as a second language, or Spanish in a
27 public elementary or secondary school in this state that has a

1 shortage of teachers certified to teach in one or more of those
2 fields; and

3 (3) teach bilingual education, English as a second
4 language, or Spanish at that school for at least two school years.

5 Sec. 61.9854. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES. The board shall award
6 financial incentives such as tuition assistance or student loan
7 repayment to each participant in the program to assist with the cost
8 of payment of mandatory tuition and fees for courses required to
9 obtain certification to teach bilingual education, English as a
10 second language, or Spanish.

11 Sec. 61.9855. REIMBURSEMENT; EXCEPTIONS. (a) A program
12 participant who fails to meet the requirements of Section 61.9853
13 shall reimburse the board for the amount of any assistance received
14 by the participant under this subchapter.

15 (b) The board by rule shall establish exceptions to the
16 reimbursement requirement under this section for participants who
17 are unable to meet the requirements of Section 61.9853 as a result
18 of an unusual hardship.

19 Sec. 61.9856. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS. In addition to
20 money appropriated by the legislature, the board may solicit and
21 accept gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of this
22 subchapter.

23 Sec. 61.9857. RULES. The board shall adopt rules necessary
24 for the administration of this subchapter, including a rule that
25 sets the maximum amount of financial assistance that a person may
26 receive under this subchapter in one year.

27 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

1 shall adopt rules for the administration of Subchapter LL, Chapter
2 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable
3 after this Act takes effect. For that purpose, the coordinating
4 board may adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for
5 emergency rules.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.