

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1327
By: Bivins
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DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently there is a need to improve teacher training in the area of mathematics to improve student performance in math in school districts where students are performing below grade level in math and are receiving low scores on the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test. As proposed, S.B. 1327 creates a master mathematics teacher certificate to ensure that there are teachers with special training to work with other teachers and students in order to improve student mathematics performance.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTIONS 2 (Section 21.411, Education Code) and 5 (Section 29.087, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 21B, Education Code, by adding Section 21.0482, as follows:

Sec. 21.0482. MASTER MATHEMATICS TEACHER CERTIFICATION. (a) Requires the State Board for Educator Certification (board) to establish a master mathematics teacher certificate to ensure that there are teachers with special training to work with other teachers and with students in order to improve student mathematics performance.

(b) Requires the board to issue a master mathematics teacher certificate to each eligible person.

(c) Requires a person to meet certain requirements to be eligible for a master mathematics teacher certificate.

(d) Requires the course of instruction prescribed under Subsection (c)(3) to be developed by the board in consultation with appropriate faculty members at institutions of higher education.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 21I, Education Code, by adding Section 21.411, as follows:

Sec. 21.411. MASTER MATHEMATICS TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish a master mathematics teacher grant program to encourage teachers to become certified as master mathematics teachers and work with other teachers and with students in order to improve student mathematics performance.

(b) Requires the commissioner to make grants, from funds appropriated for the purpose, to school districts as provided by this section to pay stipends to selected certified master mathematics teachers who teach at high-need campuses.

(c) Requires the commissioner to annually identify each high-need campus in a school

district using criteria established by the commissioner by rule, including performance on the mathematics assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023. Requires the commissioner to also use the criteria to rank campuses in order of greatest need.

(d) Authorizes a school district to apply to the commissioner for grants for each high-need campus identified by the commissioner to be used to pay stipends to certified master mathematics teachers in accordance with this section. Provides that unless reduced under Subsection (g) or (i), each grant is in the amount of \$5,000. Requires the commissioner to approve the application if the district meets certain requirements.

(e) Provides that unless reduced under Subsection (g) or (i), a stipend under Subsection (d)(2) is in the amount of \$5,000.

(f) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules for the distribution of grants to school districts following the year of the initial grant. Provides that a district that has been approved for a grant to pay a stipend to a certified master mathematics teacher is not required to reapply for a grant for two consecutive school years following the year of the initial grant if the district carries out certain duties.

(g) Requires the commissioner to reduce payments to a school district proportionately to the extent a teacher does not meet the requirements under Subsection (d)(2) for the entire school year. Sets forth provisions relating to stipends paid by school districts to certain teachers.

(h) Provides that a grant a school district receives under this section is in addition to any funding the district receives under Chapter 42. Requires the commissioner to distribute funds under this section with the Foundation School Program payment to which the district is entitled as soon as practicable after the end of the school year as determined by the commissioner. Provides that a district to which Chapter 41 applies is entitled to the grants paid under this section. Requires the commissioner to determine the timing of the distribution of grants to a district that does not receive Foundation School Program payments.

(i) Provides that this section does not create a property right to a grant or stipend. Entitles a school district to a grant to carry out the purposes of this section only to the extent the commissioner makes the grant in accordance with this section and only to the extent sufficient state funds are appropriated for those purposes. Requires the commissioner, if state funds are appropriated but are insufficient to fully fund a grant, to reduce the grant paid to each district and requires the district to reduce the stipend the district pays to each teacher under this section proportionately so that each selected teacher receives the same amount of money.

(j) Provides that a decision of the commissioner concerning the amount of money to which a school district is entitled under this section is final and may not be appealed. Requires each district to, in the manner and at the time prescribed by the commissioner, provide to the commissioner proof acceptable to the commissioner of the master mathematics teacher certification of a teacher to whom the district is paying a stipend under this section.

(k) Authorizes the commissioner to audit the expenditure of money appropriated for purposes of this section. Requires a district's use of the money appropriated for purposes of this section to be verified as part of the district audit under Section 44.008.

(l) Provides that a stipend a teacher receives under this section is not considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary under

Section 21.402.

(m) Authorizes the commissioner to adopt other rules as necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 3. Amends Chapter 21J, Education Code, by adding Sections 21.454 and 21.455, as follows:

Sec. 21.454. MATHEMATICS TRAINING. (a) Requires the commissioner to develop training materials and other teacher training resources for a school district to use in assisting mathematics teachers in developing expertise in the appropriate mathematics curriculum and comprehension of the instructional approaches that, through scientific testing, have been proven effective in improving student mathematics skills.

(b) Requires the commissioner to develop materials and resources under this section in consultation with appropriate faculty members at institutions of higher education.

(c) Requires the commissioner to make the training materials and other teacher training resources required under Subsection (a) available to mathematics teachers through a variety of mechanisms, including distance learning, mentoring programs, small group inquiries, computer-assisted training, and mechanisms based on trainer-of-trainer models.

(d) Requires the commissioner to use funds appropriated for the purpose to administer this section.

Sec. 21.455. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES IN MATHEMATICS.

(a) Requires the commissioner to develop and make available professional development institutes for teachers who provide instruction in mathematics to students at the fifth through eighth grade levels.

(b) Requires a professional development institute developed under this section to address certain issues relating to mathematical skills and instruction.

(c) Requires the commissioner to develop professional development institutes under this section in consultation with appropriate faculty members at institutions of higher education.

(d) Requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selection of teachers authorized to attend a professional development institute developed under this section.

(e) Requires the commissioner, from funds appropriated for the purpose, to pay a stipend to each teacher who completes a professional development institute developed under this section. Requires the commissioner to determine the amount of the stipend paid under this subsection.

SECTION 4. Amends Chapter 28A, Education Code, by adding Section 28.007, as follows:

Sec. 28.007. MATHEMATICS DIAGNOSIS. (a) Requires the commissioner, using funds appropriated for the purpose, to develop and make available assessment instruments that a school district may use to diagnose student mathematics skills. Requires the commissioner, in developing the assessment instruments, to consider all assessment methods available through advanced technology, including methods using the Internet or other computer resources to provide immediate assessment of a student's skills.

(b) Prohibits the results of assessment instruments required under Subsection (a) from being used for purposes of appraisals and incentives under Chapter 21 or accountability under Chapter 39.

SECTION 5. Amends Chapter 29C, Education Code, by adding Section 29.087, as follows:

Sec. 29.087. AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER INTENSIVE MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS. (a) Authorizes a school district to provide an intensive after-school program or an intensive program during the period that school is recessed for the summer to provide mathematics instruction to certain students.

(b) Requires the board of trustees of a school district, before providing a program under this section, to adopt a policy regarding certain issues relating to eligibility for the program.

(c) Requires the commissioner by rule to:

(1) prescribe a procedure that a school district must follow to apply for and receive funding for a program under this section;

(2) adopt guidelines for determining which districts receive funding if there is not sufficient funding for each district that applies;

(3) require each district providing a program to report student performance results to the commissioner within the period and in the manner prescribed by the rule; and

(4) based on district reports under Subdivision (3) and any required analysis and verification of those reports, disseminate to each district in this state information concerning instructional methods that have proved successful in improving student performance in mathematics.

(d) Requires a program provided under this section to be paid for with funds appropriated for that purpose.

SECTION 6. Amends Section 822.201(b), Government Code, to add a reference to Section 21.411, Education Code, regarding stipends paid to teachers.

SECTION 7. Requires the State Board for Educator Certification to propose rules establishing requirements and prescribing an examination for master mathematics teacher certification as required by Section 21.0482, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2003.

SECTION 8. Effective date: September 1, 2001.