

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1244

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to salary bonuses for certificated instructional staff attaining certification by the national board for professional teaching standards.

Brief Description: Providing a salary bonus for teachers who maintain certification from the national board for professional teaching standards.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunter, Talcott, Quall, Lantz, Hunt, Wood, McDermott, Simpson, Anderson and Haigh; by request of Governor Locke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/29/03, 2/19/03 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Providing a \$3,500 annual bonus to teachers who attain certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- Permits the Legislature to cap program expenditures when 5 percent of the state's eligible teachers attain certification.
- Adopts an expiration date of July 1, 2009.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, Haigh, Hunter, McMahan and Rockefeller.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Santos.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides advanced, voluntary certification for experienced teachers. The NBPTS was created as a way for the teaching profession to recognize highly accomplished teaching practices. A certificate awarded by the NBPTS is intended to show that a teacher has been judged by his or her peers as one who meets high and rigorous professional standards. The NBPTS is governed by a 63-member board of directors, of whom a majority are classroom teachers. The organization is funded through gifts and grants from foundations, corporations, individuals, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Science Foundation.

The NBPTS certifies teachers in 26 fields using a rigorous process of assessment and evaluation, for which those seeking certification pay a fee. The standards used in the process are developed by committees of teachers and other experts and are structured around student developmental levels and subject areas. There are about 215 educators with NBPTS certification working in Washington schools.

Under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, NBPTS certification will satisfy all state requirements for continuing education and for obtaining the state's professional certificate.

The 2001-2003 biennial budget provided funding for a \$3,500 salary bonus for teachers who obtained NBPTS certification. The bonus was intended to provide recognition for the teachers' outstanding performance. The budget language stipulated that the bonuses are not included in pension calculations. In addition, the budget included language stating that the Legislature intends that teachers certificated by the NBPTS be limited to four bonus payments.

Educators that seek NBPTS certification in 2003 will be assessed a fee of \$2,300. Scholarship assistance with some or all of the fee is available from foundations, school districts and the federal government. In addition, the state and the Gates and Stuart Foundations have joined together to create a support program for NBPTS candidates. Four million dollars was provided to subsidize the certification fee, develop a network of successful candidates, and increase awareness of the process among Washington's teachers. In addition to those efforts, State Farm has donated \$10,000 for fee subsidies and at least seven school districts help candidates pay the fee.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Teachers who have attained certification from the NBPTS will receive a \$3,500 bonus for each year that the teachers maintain that certification. The bonus will not be included in a district's average salary calculation and is exempt from statutory salary limits.

The Legislature may cap program expenditures at the amount required to pay a \$3,500 bonus to 5 percent of the public school teachers eligible for such certification. If the program is capped and the number of eligible teachers exceeds the amount appropriated, each teacher will get a pro-rata share of the amount provided.

By August 1, 2006, the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) will review the NBPTS certification standards to determine whether they are sufficiently rigorous and aligned to student achievement. By December 15, 2008, the PESB will report to the appropriate House and Senate committees whether the bonuses should be continued, modified or eliminated.

The bonuses expire on July 1, 2009.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Legislature may cap program expenditures, the PESB will review and report on the bonuses, and the bonuses expire on July 1, 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The NBPTS has developed thoughtful, comprehensive, quality teaching standards coupled with a rigorous examination of a teacher's skill and knowledge. It has created a process that helps participants grow professionally as they document their effectiveness in the classroom. The challenging process improves the teaching ability of the participant, models a way that teachers can pursue excellence, and creates a path to improve the teaching profession. The process is so rigorous that only half of the participants successfully complete it the first time through. The bonuses proposed in this legislation will help the state acknowledge and retain some of its most effective, committed, and professional educators.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Hunter, prime sponsor; Judy Hartmann, Governor's Office; Greg Williamson, Jeanne Harmon, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Richelle Bouse, Bellevue School District; Jolene Yoakum, Federal Way School District; Gary King, Washington Education Association; and Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board.