



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB3663

Introduced 2/5/2026, by Sen. Christopher Belt

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/21B-70

Amends the Educator Licensure Article of the School Code with respect to the Illinois Teaching Excellence Program. Provides that a maximum of \$2,000 (rather than \$1,000) shall be given as monetary assistance and incentives toward the National Board for Professional Teaching standards' renewal application fee. Removes other monetary assistance and incentives. Provides that the State Board of Education shall provide an annual stipend of \$4,000 for up to 5 years to teachers who hold current National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification. Provides that to receive the \$4,000 annual stipend, the National Board certified teacher must be employed as a public school teacher and must hold a valid National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certificate throughout each year of the stipend. Provides that if there are adequate funds available, mentoring programming must be made available to support qualified educators in their pursuit of National Board certification. Sets forth specific incentives, and provides that funds may also be used for (i) professional development training provided by National Board certified teachers or (ii) instructional leadership training for qualified educators interested in supporting implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards or teaching and learning priorities of the State Board of Education or both. Provides that the selection of teachers who hold both a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards designation and a current corresponding certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards shall be encouraged for other mentoring programs.

LRB104 19931 LNS 33381 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section
5 21B-70 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/21B-70)

7 Sec. 21B-70. Illinois Teaching Excellence Program.

8 (a) As used in this Section:

9 ~~"Diverse candidate" means a candidate who identifies with~~
10 ~~any of the ethnicities reported on the Illinois Report Card~~
11 ~~other than White.~~

12 ~~"Hard to staff school" means a public school in which no~~
13 ~~less than 30% of the student enrollment is considered~~
14 ~~low income as reported by the report card under Section 10-17a~~
15 ~~of this Code.~~

16 "National Board certified teacher candidate cohort
17 facilitator" means a National Board certified teacher who
18 collaborates to advance the goal of supporting ~~all other~~
19 ~~candidate cohorts other than diverse candidate cohorts~~ through
20 the Illinois National Board for Professional Teaching
21 Standards Comprehensive Support System.

22 ~~"National Board certified teacher diverse candidate cohort~~
23 ~~facilitator" means a National Board certified teacher who~~

1 ~~collaborates to advance the goal of supporting racially and~~
2 ~~ethnically diverse candidates through the Illinois National~~
3 ~~Board for Professional Teaching Standards Comprehensive~~
4 ~~Support System.~~

5 ~~"National Board certified teacher diverse liaison" means~~
6 ~~an individual or entity that supports the National Board~~
7 ~~certified teacher leading a diverse candidate cohort.~~

8 "National Board certified teacher liaison" means an
9 individual or entity that supports the National Board
10 certified teacher leading a candidate cohort ~~cohorts other~~
11 ~~than diverse candidate cohorts.~~

12 ~~"National Board certified teacher rural or remote or~~
13 ~~distant candidate cohort facilitator" means a National Board~~
14 ~~certified teacher who collaborates to advance the goal of~~
15 ~~supporting rural or remote candidates through the Illinois~~
16 ~~National Board for Professional Teaching Standards~~
17 ~~Comprehensive Support System.~~

18 ~~"National Board certified teacher rural or remote or~~
19 ~~distant liaison" means an individual or entity that supports~~
20 ~~the National Board certified teacher leading a rural or remote~~
21 ~~candidate cohort.~~

22 "Qualified educator" means a teacher or school counselor
23 currently employed in a school district who is in the process
24 of obtaining certification through the National Board for
25 Professional Teaching Standards or who has completed
26 certification and holds a current Professional Educator

1 License with a National Board for Professional Teaching
2 Standards designation or a retired teacher or school counselor
3 who holds a Professional Educator License with a National
4 Board for Professional Teaching Standards designation.

5 ~~"Rural or remote" or "rural or remote or distant" means~~
6 ~~local codes 32, 33, 41, 42, and 43 of the New Urban Centric~~
7 ~~Locale Codes, as defined by the National Center for Education~~
8 ~~Statistics.~~

9 "Tier 1" has the meaning given to that term under Section
10 18-8.15.

11 ~~"Tier 2" has the meaning given to that term under Section~~
12 ~~18-8.15.~~

13 (b) Any funds appropriated for the Illinois Teaching
14 Excellence Program must be used to provide monetary assistance
15 and incentives for qualified educators who are employed by or
16 retired from school districts and who have or are in the
17 process of obtaining certification ~~licensure~~ through the
18 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The goal
19 of the program is to improve instruction and student
20 performance.

21 The State Board of Education shall allocate an amount as
22 annually appropriated by the General Assembly for the Illinois
23 Teaching Excellence Program for (i) application or re-take
24 fees for each qualified educator seeking to complete
25 certification through the National Board for Professional
26 Teaching Standards, to be paid directly to the National Board

1 for Professional Teaching Standards, and (ii) incentives under
2 paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (c) for each
3 qualified educator, to be distributed to the respective school
4 district, and incentives under paragraph (5) of subsection
5 (c), to be distributed to the respective school district or
6 directly to the qualified educator. The school district shall
7 distribute this payment to each eligible teacher or school
8 counselor as a single payment.

9 The State Board of Education's annual budget must set out
10 by separate line item the appropriation for the program.
11 Unless otherwise provided by appropriation, qualified
12 educators are eligible for monetary assistance and incentives
13 outlined in subsections (c) and (d) of this Section.

14 (c) When there are adequate funds available, monetary
15 assistance and incentives shall include the following:

16 (1) A maximum of \$2,000 toward the application or
17 re-take fee for teachers or school counselors in a Tier 1
18 school district who apply on a first-come, first-serve
19 basis for National Board certification.

20 (2) A maximum of \$2,000 toward the application or
21 re-take fee for teachers or school counselors in a school
22 district other than a Tier 1 school district who apply on a
23 first-come, first-serve basis for National Board
24 certification.

25 (3) A maximum of \$2,000 ~~\$1,000~~ toward the National
26 Board for Professional Teaching Standards' renewal

1 application fee.

2 (4) (Blank).

3 (5) (Blank). ~~An annual incentive of no more than~~
4 ~~\$2,250 prorated at \$50 per hour, which shall be paid to~~
5 ~~each qualified educator currently employed in a school~~
6 ~~district who holds both a National Board for Professional~~
7 ~~Teaching Standards designation and a current corresponding~~
8 ~~certificate issued by the National Board for Professional~~
9 ~~Teaching Standards and who agrees, in writing, to provide~~
10 ~~up to 45 hours of mentoring or National Board for~~
11 ~~Professional Teaching Standards professional development~~
12 ~~or both during the school year to classroom teachers or~~
13 ~~school counselors, as applicable. Funds must be disbursed~~
14 ~~on a first come, first serve basis, with priority given to~~
15 ~~Tier 1 school districts. Mentoring shall include, either~~
16 ~~singly or in combination, the following:~~

17 ~~(A) National Board for Professional Teaching~~
18 ~~Standards certification candidates.~~

19 ~~(B) National Board for Professional Teaching~~
20 ~~Standards re take candidates.~~

21 ~~(C) National Board for Professional Teaching~~
22 ~~Standards renewal candidates.~~

23 ~~(D) (Blank).~~

24 ~~Funds may also be used for professional development~~
25 ~~training provided by the National Board Resource Center.~~

26 ~~Funds may also be used for instructional leadership~~

1 ~~training for qualified educators interested in supporting~~
2 ~~implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards or teaching~~
3 ~~and learning priorities of the State Board of Education or~~
4 ~~both.~~

5 (d) In addition to the monetary assistance and incentives
6 provided under subsection (c), if adequate funds are
7 available, the State Board of Education shall provide an
8 annual stipend of \$4,000 for up to 5 years to teachers who hold
9 current National Board for Professional Teacher Standards
10 certification ~~incentives shall include the following~~
11 ~~incentives for the program in rural or remote schools or~~
12 ~~school districts or for programs working with diverse~~
13 ~~candidates or for retention bonuses for hard-to-staff schools,~~
14 ~~to be distributed to the respective school district or~~
15 ~~directly to the qualified educator or entity.~~+

16 ~~(1) A one time incentive of \$3,000 payable to National~~
17 ~~Board certified teachers teaching in Tier 1 or Tier 2~~
18 ~~rural or remote school districts or rural or remote~~
19 ~~schools in Tier 1 or Tier 2 school districts, with~~
20 ~~priority given to teachers teaching in Tier 1 rural or~~
21 ~~remote school districts or rural or remote schools in Tier~~
22 ~~1 school districts.~~

23 ~~(2) An annual incentive of \$3,200 for National Board~~
24 ~~certified teacher rural or remote or distant candidate~~
25 ~~cohort facilitators, diverse candidate cohort~~
26 ~~facilitators, and candidate cohort facilitators. Priority~~

1 ~~shall be given to rural or remote candidate cohort~~
2 ~~facilitators and diverse candidate cohort facilitators.~~

3 ~~(3) An annual incentive of \$2,500 for National Board~~
4 ~~certified teacher rural or remote or distant liaisons,~~
5 ~~diverse liaisons, and liaisons. Priority shall be given to~~
6 ~~rural or remote liaisons and diverse liaisons.~~

7 ~~(4) An annual retention bonus of \$4,000 per year for 2~~
8 ~~consecutive years shall be awarded to National Board~~
9 ~~certified teachers employed in hard to staff schools.~~
10 ~~Funds must be disbursed on a first come, first served~~
11 ~~basis.~~

12 To receive the \$4,000 annual stipend, the National Board
13 certified teacher must be employed as a public school teacher
14 in this State and must hold a valid National Board for
15 Professional Teacher Standards certificate throughout each
16 year of the stipend.

17 (e) If there are adequate funds available, programming
18 must be made available to support qualified educators in their
19 pursuit of National Board certification. This shall include
20 each of the following:

21 (1) An annual incentive of no more than \$3,000,
22 prorated at \$50 per hour, which shall be paid to each
23 qualified educator currently employed in a school district
24 who holds both a National Board for Professional Teaching
25 Standards designation and a current corresponding
26 certificate issued by the National Board for Professional

1 Teaching Standards and who agrees, in writing, to provide
2 up to 60 hours of mentoring or National Board for
3 Professional Teaching Standards professional development
4 or both during the school year to classroom teachers or
5 school counselors, as applicable. Funds must be disbursed
6 on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given
7 to Tier 1 school districts. Mentoring shall include,
8 either singly or in combination, mentoring of the
9 following:

10 (A) National Board for Professional Teaching
11 Standards certification candidates.

12 (B) National Board for Professional Teaching
13 Standards re-take candidates.

14 (C) National Board for Professional Teaching
15 Standards renewal candidates.

16 (2) An annual incentive of \$3,200 for National Board
17 certified teacher candidate cohort facilitators.

18 (3) An annual incentive of \$2,500 for National Board
19 certified teacher liaisons.

20 Funds under this subsection (e) may also be used for (i)
21 professional development training provided by National Board
22 certified teachers or (ii) instructional leadership training
23 for qualified educators interested in supporting
24 implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards or teaching
25 and learning priorities of the State Board of Education or
26 both.

1 The selection of teachers who hold both a National Board
2 for Professional Teaching Standards designation and a current
3 corresponding certificate issued by the National Board for
4 Professional Teaching Standards shall be encouraged for other
5 mentoring programs.

6 (Source: P.A. 103-122, eff. 6-30-23; 103-207, eff. 1-1-24;
7 103-605, eff. 7-1-24.)