

Testimony

To

Senate Education Committee

February 22, 2005

Senator Shapiro, members, I am Jack Kelly, with the Texas State Teachers Association, testifying for SB 83.

This session there has already been lots of discussion about improving student performance. It is included as item number one, in Part One of the outline for SB 2— Improve the quality of public education for all students. TSTA feels a way to accomplish that goal is to get the best-qualified person possible in every classroom in the state.

National Board Certification is an extremely rigorous system based on what an accomplished teacher should know and be able to do. The certification process challenges teachers to analyze their work. Going through that process helps teachers improve their own skills and helps them to be more effective mentors for their colleagues.

National Board Certification is available in twenty-four teaching fields (list attached), which include most subject areas.

Although this program was begun nearly twenty years ago in 1987, few Texas teachers have gotten national certification. There are probably several common sense reasons so few teachers have participated. First, the \$2300 application fee is a bit steep for many of our people. Second, the certification process takes a lot of time and effort and our teachers already feel somewhat overwhelmed with all that is expected of them. And finally, there is no reward, other than self-satisfaction, if a person successfully completes the process.

TSTA feels SB 83 is a great first step toward addressing these concerns and encouraging more Texas teachers to participate in National Board Certification. TSTA would encourage this committee to seriously consider (1) eliminating or increasing the 500 per year cap on the number of teachers who can participate in this program; (2) allowing all teachers to apply to participate; and (3) making the \$4000 stipend for successful candidates mandatory, not optional, for each year a person holds a valid national certificate.

National Board Certificates 2002-2003

In 2002-2003, the following certificates are offered:

- Early Childhood/Generalist
- Middle Childhood/Generalist
- Early Adolescence/Generalist
- Early Adolescence/English Language Arts
- Early Adolescence/Mathematics
- Early Adolescence/Science
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science
- Early Adolescence/Social Studies History
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Social Studies History
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts
- Early and Middle Childhood/Art
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Art
- Early and Middle Childhood/World Languages Other than English
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other than English
- Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Library Media
- Early and Middle Childhood/Music
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Music
- Early and Middle Childhood/Physical Education
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Physical Education
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Career and Technical Education
- Early and Middle Childhood/English as a New Language
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/English as a New Language
- Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs