

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 521
By: Grusendorf
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND

Under current law, the Texas Education Agency has instruments that assess social studies knowledge of public school students in eight and tenth grade and science knowledge and skills of students in the fifth and tenth grade. Many have expressed concern that public school students do not have the essential knowledge and skills in the area of social studies due to a lack of testing on the subject at an earlier grade level. In addition, the No Child Left Behind Act requires that public school students be assessed in the area of science during middle school.

PURPOSE

The purpose of House Bill 521 is to address the deficiency in social studies knowledge in students and to achieve compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act. The bill also creates a more coherent and consistent testing sequence over several grade levels.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

House Bill 521 requires the Texas Education Agency to adopt or develop criterion-referenced assessment instruments designed to assess essential knowledge and skills in social studies in grades five, eight, and ten, and in science in grades five, eight, and ten.

The commissioner of education (commissioner) shall adopt rules for the implementation of this Act. The bill requires the commissioner's rules to provide that not later than the 2006-2007 school year, the State Board of Education shall administer a social studies assessment instrument to students in the fifth grade and a science assessment instrument to students in the eighth grade.

The bill requires the commissioner's rules to provide that not later than the 2008-2009 school year, the Texas Education Agency, in evaluating the performance of school districts, campuses, and open-enrollment charter schools shall include the results of student performance on the fifth grade social studies assessment instrument and the eighth grade science assessment instrument.

The bill requires the commissioner's rules to provide that, not later than the 2008-2009 school year, the State Board of Education shall administer assessment instruments that correspond to the fifth grade social studies assessment instrument and the eighth grade science assessment instrument.

The bill requires the commissioner's rules to provide that, not later than the 2010-2011 school year, the Texas Education Agency shall include the results of student performance on the assessment instruments in evaluating the performance of school districts, campuses, and open-enrollment charter schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003.