

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 31  
By: Eissler  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Social Studies is the only foundation curricula not tested at the elementary level. Although the state mandates the teaching of social studies TEKS, there is no accountability measure at the elementary level. Elementary school principles have no accountability for making sure social studies is taught in their schools. As a result, there is a diminished level of social studies instruction. Consequently, insufficient time is being devoted to social studies instruction. This problem becomes more acute in schools whose scores, on the currently tested courses, are below the acceptable ranking. This will continue until a social studies test is mandated for the elementary level.

With the diversity of the school population in Texas increasing rapidly each year, it is imperative that the core concepts and values of a democratic republic and a free enterprise system are taught at the elementary level and are emphasized each year after that. A test at Grade 5 will better support the alignment of social studies concepts, knowledge, and skills from elementary through high school. The purpose of H.B. 31 is to establish the framework for state assessment of public school students in social studies in fifth grade.

### **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**

HB 31 amends the Education Code by providing that all students shall be assessed in social studies in grades five, eight and ten.

The commissioner of education shall adopt rules for the implementation of this section. The commissioner's rules must provide that not later than the 2008-2009 school year, the State Board of Education shall administer a social studies assessment instrument to students in the fifth grade; not later than the 2010-2011 school year, the Texas Education Agency shall include the results of student performance on the fifth grade social studies assessment instrument in evaluating the performance of school districts, campuses, and open enrollment charter schools; not later than the 2010- 2011 school year, the State Board of Education shall administer an assessment instrument that corresponds to the fifth grade social studies assessment instrument as required; and not later than the 2012 - 2013 school year, the Texas Education Agency shall include the results of student performance on the assessment instrument in evaluating school performance.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.