

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 221  
By: Howard  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

According to the latest NAEP results, 79% of Texas' fourth grade students cannot read at grade level. Children who are poor readers in fourth grade invariably had little or no instruction in kindergarten and first grade and therefore these children produce a multitude of reading errors. As a result, fluency, vocabulary growth and comprehension skills have been severely compromised and continue to falter in advanced grade levels.

In order for Texas to rise above 45<sup>th</sup> place in producing high school graduates, the State must move to a preventive model of reading instruction that does not continue to leave a vast majority of our children behind. It is imperative to lay a solid, explicit, cumulative and systematic foundation that is embedded with essential phonological skills enabling mastery of word-reading.

CSHB 221 requires phonics, phonemic awareness, and spelling to be part of a reading curriculum which is grade specific and increases in depth complexity from one school year to the next.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

CSHB 221 amends the Education Code to provide that reading must be part of the essential knowledge and skills of English language arts for grades one through eight. Reading curriculum must be grade specific and increase in depth and complexity from one school year to the next, address phonemic awareness, and include systematic, explicit phonics and spelling instruction. This bill requires reading curriculum to be presented in an educationally effective manner. In order to be placed on a conforming list a reading textbook must meet the requirements as designated for grades one through eight. The non-conforming list includes textbooks submitted for subject and grade level that meet the requirements as set forth.

Notwithstanding the textbook review and adoption requirements under the Education Code, or the textbook review and adoption cycle the State Board of Education adopts under that section, the board shall review and adopt reading textbooks for grades one through eight that satisfy the requirements as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

Sections 1 and 2 of this Act apply beginning with the 2005 - 2006 school year.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

CSHB 221 is modified by removing additional requirements for educator training, educator preparation program, certification for teachers, and staff development in reading instruction. The substitute removes all references to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The substitute

removes the requirements for teacher editions of reading textbooks. Additionally, the substitute removes language as to the essential knowledge and skills for mathematics. The substitute removes additional testing requirements for pre-reading. The substitute also removes the mandate on the State Board of Education to adopt a nationally recognized, norm-referenced assessment instrument.