

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2495
By: Eissler
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

House Bill 1 (79th Legislature, 3rd Called Session) established an online best practices clearinghouse. The clearinghouse to the extent practicable shall provide specific, actionable information relating to the best practices of high-performing and highly efficient campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools.

This bill requires the system for developing, implementing, and maintaining a system of collecting and evaluating best practices to be capable of evaluating campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools using statistical analyses of performance data of campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools of similar demographics and to identify those campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools that are high-performing and highly efficient.

A system using performance data to identify high-performing districts and schools will improve the usefulness of the information in the clearinghouse. Districts and schools will be able to determine if instructional and financial strategies successful in similar districts might benefit their district or campus.

The bill allows the commissioner to purchase from available funds analytical tools for use by school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. Analytical tools will allow districts to further use performance data to determine what instructional and financial strategies are actually producing the best results for their schools.

The bill also requires regional education service centers to assist school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in using any instructional or analytical tools provided by the commissioner; and to assist districts and schools in implementing best practices.

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

Note: Unless otherwise specified, statutory references in this BILL ANALYSIS are to the Education Code.

The bill amends Section 7.009, Education Code, to provide that the Texas Education Agency (agency), in coordination with the Legislative Budget Board, shall establish an online clearinghouse of information relating to best practices of campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools regarding instruction, public school finance, resource allocation, and business practices. To the extent practicable, the agency shall ensure that information provided through the online clearinghouse is specific, actionable information relating to the best practices of high-performing and highly efficient campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools rather than general guidelines relating to campus, school district, and open-enrollment charter school operation. The information must be accessible by campuses, school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and interested members of the public.

The bill provides that the agency shall solicit and collect from the Legislative Budget Board, centers for education research established under Section 1.005, exemplary or recognized school districts, campuses, and open-enrollment charter schools, as rated under Section 39.072, and campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools identified under Subsection (c-1) of Section 7.009, as added by this bill, examples of best practices relating to instruction, public school finance, resource allocation, and business practices, including best practices relating to curriculum, scope and sequence, compensation and incentive systems, bilingual education and special language programs, compensatory education programs, and the effective use of instructional technology, including online courses.

The bill provides that the agency shall contract for the services of one or more third-party contractors to develop, implement, and maintain a system of collecting and evaluating the best practices of campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools. In addition to any other considerations required by law, the agency must consider an applicant's demonstrated competence and qualifications in analyzing campus, school district, and open-enrollment charter school practices in awarding such a contract.

The bill provides that the system must be capable of evaluating campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools using statistical analyses of performance data of campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools of similar demographics and identify those campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools that are high-performing and highly efficient. Such information must be accessible by campuses, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools and presented in a manner that is clear and easy to understand.

The bill provides that the commissioner may purchase from available funds curriculum and other instructional or analytical tools to provide for use by school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, and that regional education service centers shall assist school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in using any instructional or analytical tools provided by the commissioner and implementing best practices included in the online clearinghouse under the provisions of this bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.