

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2503
By: Eissler
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, Texas students are required by federal law to be technology literate by the end of the 8th grade. Texas defines “technology literate” as students meeting the state’s Technology Applications Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Additionally, the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) Long-Range Plan for Technology includes a priority for Technology Applications Accountability.

Texas has high Technology Application content standards and a wide assortment of technology application materials; however, Texas does not have a statewide process for gathering quantitative technology literacy data, nor does the State have an accountability measure that Texas school districts can use to report to the TEA student mastery of Technology Applications TEKS. The absence of a data-gathering tool and an accountability measure for school districts results in Texas’ inability to have data to use for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education. More importantly, Texas does not have the capability to determine students’ technology literacy mastery, which has implications for college readiness, student success, employability, workforce and economic development, and knowledge of key 21st century skills.

C.S.H.B. 2503 would provide for a statewide pilot of an online technology assessment for a sample of Texas students. This bill would provide Texas with a benchmark of its students’ technology proficiency.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Commissioner of Education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a technology literacy assessment pilot program. The Commissioner of Education by rule shall establish the pilot program in which a participating school district assesses student technology proficiency.

School districts wishing to participate in the program may apply to the Commissioner, who shall select schools for participation from both rural and urban areas of the state.

The Texas Education Agency shall adopt an assessment instrument designed to assess individual student mastery of essential knowledge and skills in technology to be administered by school districts participating in the program.

This assessment instrument shall be administered each school year in participating school districts. Each school district shall choose which grade level (5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, or 9th grade) in which to give the assessment, and it shall be administered to each student in the chosen grade level. A participating school district shall give the test at a time of its choosing.

This assessment instrument must be administered online, must be aligned with the essential knowledge and skill requirements for technology applications, must incorporate performance-based measures, and must be designed in a manner to provide the district with an automatic report of the technology literacy proficiency of a student in a format compatible with school district and state data information systems.

A participating school district must report student performance on the assessment to the Texas Education Agency.

The bill provides that the Act applies beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

C.S.H.B. 2503 80(R)

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

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The original bill provides that each school year, the assessment instrument shall be administered in a participating school district to each student in grades five through nine at a time determined by the district. The substitute bill provides that each school year, the assessment instrument shall be administered in a participating school district to each student in either fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, or ninth grade, with the grade level and time to be determined by the district.