

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2504
By: Eissler
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

HB1 from the 3rd Special Session of the 79th Legislature established a new requirement that all high school students must complete four years of math instruction to graduate. In May of 2006 the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported that only sixty-seven percent of eighth graders met the standard required by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test. In order for the remaining third of those students to be prepared to pass four full years of mathematics, additional intensive mathematics intervention and assistance in algebra are necessary. However, the TEA has designated mathematics as an Acute Teacher Shortage Area for Retire/Rehire purposes and for Student Loan Forgiveness and Cancellation.

In order to provide the additional mathematics intervention necessary while facing the current shortage of math teachers, this bill would establish an Intensive Mathematics and Algebra Intervention Program to provide additional intervention tools for students who are performing below grade level in math. The program builds on the existing comprehensive, research-based core program materials and uses of the existing Texas Math Diagnostic System, while providing students with additional instruction to prepare for the new high school requirements.

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 would amend the Education Code to establish an Intensive Mathematics and Algebra Intervention Program (intervention program).

The bill provides that the Commissioner of Education by rule shall establish an intervention program in which a participating campus provides intensive mathematics intervention for students who are not performing at grade level in math in grades 4 through 7 and an algebra intervention program for students who are not performing at grade level in mathematics in grade 8.

The intervention programs must use current technology to diagnose student deficiencies and must allow a student to progress in a manner that is appropriate for the student.

The bill requires that, beginning in grade three, a participating campus shall identify a student who does not perform at grade level on specific assessment instruments, as a student eligible for participation in the intervention program. A campus will use entry-level screening and diagnostic assessments approved by TEA to determine appropriate student placement and level of instruction, and will use monitoring assessments to ensure that a student is making appropriate progress.

The bill provides that the Commissioner shall adopt a list of intervention programs that may be implemented by a school district. A district-level committee may also adopt a list of intervention programs that may be implemented by a district campus. A participating campus may implement only an intervention program from one of these lists.

The bill provides that the Commissioner shall adopt minimum criteria that an intervention program must satisfy in order to be on one of the lists specified above. The bill describes such criteria in detail.

The bill provides that each participating student shall be assessed upon entry into, and transfer from, the program to measure the student's progress.

The bill provides that the Commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to implement the intervention program.

The bill provides that TEA, in consultation with participating districts, shall provide the Legislature with a comparative report on student progress under the intervention program, in accordance with specific criteria described in the bill. The report shall be provided not later than December 31, 2008. The subsection setting forth the reporting requirement expires June 1, 2009.

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

EFFECTIVE DATE

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 substitute bill adds the provisions described above concerning the Commissioner's adoption of a list of intervention programs that may be implemented by a school district, a district-level committee's adoption of a list of intervention programs that may be implemented by a district campus, and that a participating campus may implement only an intervention program from one of these lists. The substitute includes conforming changes to reflect the inclusion of these provisions, expands upon criteria that the commissioner shall adopt for an intervention program to be on one of the lists, and strikes the following provision that was in the original bill:

(f) A participating campus shall submit a summary of the proposed intervention program to the commissioner for approval. A selected intervention program must have been proven to:

- (1) accelerate learning;
- (2) improve cognitive ability; and
- (3) increase mathematics proficiency..