

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2529
By: Patrick
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), from 2003-2005, 4,570 public school campuses were required to participate in annual spring field testing of mixed format TAKS tests. Annual statewide field testing for Grade 9 Reading, Grade 10 ELA, and Exit-Level ELA requires approximately 30 percent, 40 percent, and 60 percent of the state's student population to participate, respectively.

The state will test approximately 475,000 students in TAKS field tests alone this year.

The two main ways to field test are to imbed questions in existing operational tests; or to conduct stand-alone field testing, which requires schools to spend additional time field-testing. Currently, TEA requires campuses to participate in field-testing.

Due to increased concern that certain campuses may have historically been disproportionately required to participate in spring TAKS field-testing efforts, the Texas Education Agency conducted a study in 2005 focusing on field testing of "mixed-format" TAKS tests (combination of multiple choice and constructed response questions).

As a result, TEA proposed two plans which constrained annual participation and included "relief years" when campuses would not be included in a separate field test for TAKS for any grade level.

H.B. 2529 builds on TEA's proposal by limiting stand-alone field testing for the same school campus to once during a period of four school years and requiring that field testing be conducted on a rotating basis among campuses in the state. The bill also calls for field testing to be administered during the spring semester only after the assessment instruments are administered.

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

The bill amends Section 39.035, Education Code, by adding language to specify that TEA may conduct field testing for any assessment instrument (administered under certain specified provisions of the Education Code) only during the spring semester after the assessment instruments are administered; and on the same school campus only once during a period of four school years. The bill also provides that TEA shall ensure that field testing is conducted on a rotating basis among campuses in the state.

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.