

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 135
By: Villarreal
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, in educator preparation programs, a minimum number of hours of field-based experience must be completed prior to student teaching, clinical teaching, or internship. Up to one-half of the field-based experience hours may be provided by use of electronic transmission or other video- or technology-based method. Additionally, that the field-based hours include practice teaching with students is not specified. As a result, a teacher of record may begin a school year with no practice teaching experience but with the responsibility of serving as a classroom's sole teacher for the school year. Practice teaching is required before a full teaching certificate may be issued, but teachers from alternative certification programs typically serve as a teacher of record with full teaching responsibilities for a year before their probationary certification is replaced with a full certificate.

Education experts report that practice teaching is an important component of teacher preparation. Prospective teachers in traditional university-based teacher preparation programs often spend more than 100 hours practice teaching. Prospective teachers in some alternative teacher certification programs spend at least 15 hours practice teaching. C.S.H.B. 135 seeks to ensure that teacher candidates spend a certain amount of time physically present in a classroom assisting with instruction of students before being employed by a school district as a teacher of record.

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

C.S.H.B. 135 amends the Education Code to require a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, before a school district may employ the candidate as such, to complete at least 15 hours of field experience in which the candidate is physically present in a classroom assisting with instruction of students by preparing lesson plans and delivering instruction to students under the supervision of a teacher of record at a public school campus accredited for the purpose by the Texas Education Agency or at a private school recognized for the purpose by the agency. The bill establishes that this requirement does not affect the period within which an individual must complete field experience hours as determined by State Board for Educator Certification rule if the individual is not accepted into an educator preparation program before the deadline prescribed by board rule and is hired for a teaching assignment by a school district after the deadline prescribed by board rule.

C.S.H.B. 135 requires the State Board for Educator Certification, on or before January 1, 2012, to propose rules relating to the field experience outlined in the bill's provisions and requires the commissioner of education by rule to adopt procedures and standards for recognizing a private school for purposes of classroom instruction field experience. The bill defines "teacher of record," for purposes of its provisions, as a person employed by a school district who teaches the majority of the instructional day in an academic instructional setting and is responsible for

evaluating student achievement and assigning grades.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 135 differs from the original by requiring a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, in completing required field experience, to be physically present in a classroom assisting with instruction of students by preparing lesson plans and delivering instruction to students under the supervision of a teacher of record at a public school campus accredited for the purpose by the Texas Education Agency or at a private school recognized for the purpose by the agency, whereas the original requires such a candidate to be physically present in a classroom instructing students at a campus assigned an acceptable performance rating in a school district assigned an accredited status as provided by state law or at a private school recognized for the purpose by the agency. The substitute contains a provision not included in the original establishing that this field experience requirement does not affect the period within which an individual must complete field experience hours as determined by State Board for Educator Certification rule if the individual is not accepted into an educator preparation program before the deadline prescribed by board rule and is hired for a teaching assignment by a school district after the deadline prescribed by board rule. The substitute omits a provision included in the original requiring the agency to adopt rules relating to educator certification by a certain date.