

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 290
By: Watson
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of S.B. 290 is to imbed financial concepts in Kindergarten through grade eight curriculum so that children learn financial literacy at an early age. Many consumers today graduated without even a basic knowledge of money management such as creating and sticking to a budget.

Financial literacy should be integrated into the current mathematics curriculum for at least two reasons. First, requiring financial literacy as a separate course stresses the already crowded school day, which includes the 4x4 curriculum, physical education, and arts education. Formerly required courses, like health, are now electives. Second, imbedding financial literacy into the mathematics curriculum will have the added benefit of showing students that mathematics is relevant because knowledge of mathematics leads to personal financial gain.

Understanding economics gives students lifelong confidence that they can comprehend the world in which they work, save, and spend, and empowers them with the competence to make decisions as consumers, homeowners, and employers or employees. Our students, both college-bound and those who opt for immediate employment, will be required throughout their lives to make economic decisions important for their own success. A thorough understanding of economics will contribute not only to their personal success, but to the success of the businesses, institutions, and governments in which they participate.

In 2005, the legislature passed S.B. 851 directing the Texas Education Agency to establish a financial literacy pilot program in no more than five school districts to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make critical financial decisions. A subsequent bill filed in 2009, by Senator Eliot Shapleigh, to expand the pilot did not pass.

The current statute, Section 28.0021, Education Code, states that the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills shall require instruction in personal financial literacy in one or more courses required for high school graduation.

S.B. 290 amends current law relating to including a personal financial literacy component in public school mathematics instruction.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.0021(a), Education Code, to require that the Texas essential knowledge and skills and, as applicable, Section 28.025 (High School Diploma and Certificate; Academic Achievement Record) require instruction in personal financial literacy in mathematics instruction in kindergarten through grade eight and one or more courses required for high school graduation.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 31.0231(a), Education Code, to require the commissioner of education to adopt a list of electronic textbooks and instructional material that conveys information to the student or otherwise contributes to the learning process, including tools, models, and investigative materials designed for use as part of the foundation curriculum for science in kindergarten through grade five and personal financial literacy in kindergarten through grade eight.

SECTION 3. Requires the State Board of Education, for purposes of the textbook review and adoption requirements under Section 31.022 (Textbook Review and Adoption), Education Code, to review and adopt mathematics textbooks that satisfy the requirements of Section 28.0021 (Personal Financial Literacy), Education Code, as amended by this Act, on the next scheduled review and adoption cycle for mathematics textbooks after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.