

By: Martinez Fischer

H.B. No. 1704

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot project to assess public school students by alternative methods.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 39, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 39.0236 to read as follows:

Sec. 39.0236. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS PILOT PROJECT. (a) In this section, "alternative assessment" means a method of assessment in which a student is required to solve a problem or demonstrate a skill but is not required to answer questions from a list of possible answers. The term includes assessment through short-answer questions, an essay, a performance, an oral presentation, a demonstration, an experiment, or an exhibition.

(b) The agency shall establish a pilot project to use alternative assessment as provided by this section in assessing the performance of students.

(c) The agency shall select six public schools to participate in the pilot project. The selected schools must include two schools located in urban areas, two schools located in suburban areas, and two schools located in rural areas. The agency may not select to participate in the pilot project a school that has been rated as academically unacceptable during any of the five years preceding the initial year of the pilot project.

1 Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter:

2 (1) the academic performance of students in the sixth,
3 seventh, and eighth grade levels in the schools selected to
4 participate in the pilot project shall be assessed in mathematics,
5 science, reading, writing, and social studies using an alternative
6 assessment method rather than any assessment instrument that would
7 otherwise be required under Section 39.023; and

8 (2) the performance of each school selected to
9 participate in the pilot project shall be measured based on student
10 performance using an alternative assessment method rather than any
11 assessment instrument that would otherwise be required under
12 Section 39.023.

13 (d) Each alternative assessment shall be administered under
14 this section to students near the end of each school year.

15 (e) The agency shall adopt rules as necessary to administer
16 this section, including, notwithstanding any other provision of
17 this chapter, rules for determining the level of performance
18 considered to be satisfactory on the alternative assessments.

19 (f) The agency shall implement the pilot project beginning
20 with the 2012-2013 school year. The agency may consult with an
21 institution of higher education in implementing, administering, or
22 evaluating the pilot project.

23 (g) Not later than December 1, 2014, the agency shall report
24 to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of
25 representatives, and presiding officer of the standing committee of
26 each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over public
27 education concerning:

1 (1) based in part on assessment instrument results and
2 other performance of fifth grade students before participating in
3 the pilot project and of ninth grade students after participating
4 in the project, any impact of alternative assessment under this
5 section on:

6 (A) student academic performance;

7 (B) student performance on assessments;

8 (C) school attendance by or retention of
9 students;

10 (D) curriculum enhancement; and

11 (E) teacher professional satisfaction; and

12 (2) any recommendation concerning retaining,
13 modifying, or expanding the alternative assessment project under
14 this section.

15 (h) This section expires September 1, 2015.

16 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.