

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2609
By: Farney
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been reported that over the next 10 years, employers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields will require more graduates with STEM backgrounds than United States colleges and universities are on track to produce. Mathematics is a foundational skill for nearly all STEM pathways; however, not enough Texas students achieved scores considered to be advanced or proficient on a recent national mathematics assessment.

Interested parties contend that young learners in every setting should experience mathematics through effective, research-based curricula and teaching practices. This, in turn, necessitates supporting teachers with policies, organizational structures, and resources that enable them to succeed in this challenging and important work. The parties assert that by leveraging existing and proven research and resources, the state should develop math and technology academies for certain primary school teachers similar to previous reading initiatives. H.B. 2609 seeks to address this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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

H.B. 2609 amends the Education Code to require the commissioner of education to develop and make available mathematics achievement academies for teachers who provide mathematics instruction to students at the kindergarten or first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade level. The bill requires a mathematics achievement academy to include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in mathematics. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selecting teachers who may attend a mathematics achievement academy and requires the commissioner, in adopting such criteria, to require granting a priority to teachers employed by school districts in which 50 percent or more of the students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged. The bill entitles a teacher who attends a mathematics achievement academy to receive a stipend in the amount determined by the commissioner from funds appropriated for that purpose. The bill establishes that the stipend is not considered in determining whether a district is paying the teacher the required minimum monthly salary. The bill requires regional education service centers, on request of the commissioner, to assist the commissioner and the Texas Education Agency with training and other activities relating to the development and operation of mathematics achievement academies.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.