

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 313
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The State Board of Education (SBOE) is tasked with adopting curriculum standards for public education, known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). There is consensus among educators that the scope of TEKS is too broad to be reasonably taught within the span of the school year. S.B. 313 develops a framework to guide SBOE in narrowing the curriculum.

As proposed, S.B. 313 amends current law relating to review and modification of the essential knowledge and skills of the required public school curriculum.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, by adding Section 28.0025, as follows:

Sec. 28.0025. REVIEW AND MODIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. (a) Requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) to:

(1) conduct a review of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) adopted under Section 28.002 (Required Curriculum); and

(2) modify TEKS to narrow the number and scope of standards and skills for each subject and grade level in accordance with this section.

(b) Requires SBOE, in complying with this section, to consider:

(1) for each subject and grade level, the time:

(A) a teacher would require to provide comprehensive instruction on a particular standard or skill; and

(B) a typical student would require to master a particular standard or skill;

(2) whether, in light of the consideration required by Subdivision (1), each essential knowledge and skill of a subject can be comprehensively taught within the number of school days required under Section 25.081 (Operation of Schools), excluding the number of days required for testing;

(3) the college and career readiness standards, and whether inclusion of part of those standards in the essential knowledge and skills of a subject is possible; and

(4) whether an assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023 (Adoption and Administration of Instruments) adequately assesses a particular standard or skill.

(c) Requires SBOE to identify process skills for each subject in TEKS or use process skills already identified for each subject in TEKS to guide SBOE's modification of the essential knowledge and skills. Requires that the essential knowledge and skills of a subject be based on process skills that enable students to engage with the content of the subject and attain a greater depth of understanding of content.

(d) Requires SBOE to ensure that the established timeline reflects a priority to first review and modify a subject administering an end-of-course assessment instrument under Section 39.023(c) (relating to adoption of end-of-course assessment instruments for secondary-level courses) before administering an instrument under Section 39.023(a) (relating to the adoption or development of appropriate criterion-referenced assessment instruments to assess essential knowledge and skills). Requires SBOE to complete the review and modification of TEKS for each subject and grade level no later than September 1, 2018.

(e) Requires SBOE to ensure that each assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023 beginning with the 2015-2016 school year assesses only essential knowledge and skills identified as readiness standards by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) until the review and modification under this section are complete.

(f) Prohibits the number and scope of TEKS for each subject and grade level from being greater than the readiness standards set by TEA for each subject and grade level as of January 1, 2015, following review and modification.

(g) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2018.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.