

AN ACT

relating to requiring the Texas Education Agency to conduct a study to develop a writing assessment method for public school students and establish a pilot program to administer the assessment method developed.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 39, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 39.02301 to read as follows:

Sec. 39.02301. WRITING ASSESSMENT STUDY; PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) During the 2015-2016 school year, the agency, in coordination with the entity that has been contracted to develop or implement assessment instruments under Section 39.023, shall conduct a study to develop a writing assessment method as an alternative to the writing assessment instruments required under Sections 39.023(a) and (c). The writing assessment method must be designed to assess:

(1) a student's mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in writing through timed writing samples;

(2) improvement of a student's writing skills from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year;

(3) a student's ability to follow the writing process from rough draft to final product; and

(4) a student's ability to produce more than one type of writing style.

(b) During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, the

1 agency shall establish a pilot program as provided by this section  
2 to implement in designated school districts the writing assessment  
3 method developed under Subsection (a).

4 (c) The agency shall designate school districts to  
5 participate in the pilot program as provided by this subsection.  
6 The pilot program must include at least one large urban district,  
7 one medium-sized district, and one rural district. Each district  
8 included must have a student enrollment that is representative of  
9 diverse demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds. To the extent  
10 practicable, the agency shall designate the number of districts the  
11 agency determines appropriate to achieve the cost savings described  
12 by Subsection (d).

13 (d) A school district designated to participate in the pilot  
14 program under this section is not required to comply with the  
15 writing assessment requirements under Sections 39.023(a) and (c)  
16 during the period the district is participating in the pilot  
17 program. The agency shall, to the greatest extent practicable,  
18 apply cost savings that result from the exemption under this  
19 subsection to offset the costs accrued under this section.

20 (e) The agency shall establish the process for  
21 consolidating student writing assessments under the method  
22 developed under Subsection (a) to be submitted for scoring. This  
23 process may include the submission of a student portfolio for  
24 scoring.

25 (f) The individuals responsible for scoring student writing  
26 assessments under the pilot program shall be coordinated jointly  
27 by:

1           (1) the school district in which the student is  
2 enrolled and that is participating in the pilot program;

3           (2) a public junior college or institution of higher  
4 education that enters into an agreement with the participating  
5 school district; and

6           (3) the regional education service center that serves  
7 the participating district.

8           (g) A random sampling of scored student writing  
9 assessments, the size of which the agency shall determine, shall be  
10 delivered to the agency.

11           (h) Not later than September 1, 2016, the agency shall  
12 prepare and deliver to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the  
13 speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officer  
14 of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction  
15 over primary and secondary education a report covering the study of  
16 the development of the writing assessment method under Subsection  
17 (a). Not later than September 1 of each year in 2017 and 2018, the  
18 agency shall prepare and deliver to the governor, the lieutenant  
19 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the  
20 presiding officer of each legislative standing committee with  
21 primary jurisdiction over primary and secondary education a report  
22 that:

23           (1) evaluates the implementation and progress of the  
24 pilot program under this section; and

25           (2) makes recommendations regarding the continuation  
26 or expansion of the pilot program.

27           (i) The agency shall adopt rules as necessary to administer

1 this section.

2 (j) This section expires September 1, 2019.

3 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
4 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
5 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
6 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
7 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

H.B. No. 1164

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1164 was passed by the House on April 30, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 1164 on May 27, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 92, Nays 45, 4 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1164 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 25, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 25, Nays 6.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Governor