

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 98
By: Bernal
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerned parties note the negative impact teacher attrition has on a school's climate and student achievement and also note the potential for mentoring programs to reduce teacher attrition. H.B. 98 seeks to strengthen the state's teaching workforce by offering a permissive program that will minimize the cost of teacher attrition by setting out certain standards regarding teacher mentoring and providing for mentor program funding.

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

If a school district chooses to participate in this mentorship program, H.B. 98 amends the Education Code to require a teacher to agree to serve as a mentor teacher for at least two school years for an assignment as a mentor teacher to be made, with the assignment beginning on the first day of employment of the classroom teacher to whom the mentor teacher is assigned. The bill includes among the rules the commissioner of education is required to adopt with regard to mentor teachers rules concerning the number of classroom teachers that may be assigned to a mentor and requires the rules concerning qualifications of a mentor teacher to require that a teacher demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills to serve as a mentor.

H.B. 98 requires a public school district, should they choose to participate, to provide training that includes content related to best mentorship practices to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees who work with the classroom teacher or supervise the classroom teacher. The bill requires the training to be completed by the mentor teacher and the district and campus employees before the beginning of the school year and requires the district to also provide supplemental training to mentor teachers and employees during the school year. The bill requires a mentor teacher to meet with each classroom teacher assigned to the mentor at least once a week for an individual mentoring session lasting at least 45 minutes with not less than 12 hours of meeting time each semester and sets out the topics that mentoring sessions must address.

H.B. 98 requires a district, should they choose to participate, to designate a specific time during the regularly contracted school day for meetings between mentor teachers and classroom teachers assigned to a mentor and to schedule release time or a reduced teaching load for those mentor teachers and classroom teachers to facilitate mentoring activities.

H.B. 98 repeals provisions requiring the commissioner to adopt rules and provide funding to school districts that assign mentor teachers and restricting the use of such funding. The bill instead entitles a district that has implemented a mentoring program for classroom teachers who have less than two years of teaching experience to an allotment to fund the mentoring program and to provide stipends for mentor teachers. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt a formula to determine the allotment amount and places the same restrictions on a district's use of such funding as the applicable repealed provision. The bill applies beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.

H.B. 98 repeals Section 21.458(c), Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, the 91st day after the last day of the legislative session.