

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 816
By: Bernal
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

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. C.S.H.B. 816 seeks to strengthen the state's teaching workforce and minimize the cost of teacher attrition by setting out certain requirements 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

C.S.H.B. 816 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.

C.S.H.B. 816 requires a public school district 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.

C.S.H.B. 816 requires a district 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.

C.S.H.B. 816 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 2017-2018 school year.

C.S.H.B. 816 repeals Section 21.458(c), Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 816 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Section 21.458, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (a-1), (b-1), (f), and (g) and amending Subsections (b) and (d) to read as follows:

(a-1) To be assigned as a mentor, a teacher must agree to serve as a mentor teacher for at least two school years. The assignment must begin on the first day of employment of the classroom teacher to whom the mentor teacher is assigned.

(b) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to administer this section, including rules concerning the duties and qualifications of a teacher who serves as a mentor, and the number of classroom teachers that may be assigned to a mentor. The rules concerning qualifications must require that to serve as a mentor a teacher must:

(1) complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner;

(2) complete a mentor training program provided by the district; ~~and~~

(3) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance; and

(4) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Section 21.458, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (a-1), (b-1), (f), and (g) and amending Subsections (b) and (d) to read as follows:

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(3) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance; and

(4) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

(b-1) A school district must provide training to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees who work with the classroom teacher or supervise the classroom teacher. The training must be completed by the mentor teacher and the district and campus employees before the beginning of the school year. The district shall also provide supplemental training to mentor teachers and employees during the school year. The training must include content related to best mentorship practices.

(d) In adopting rules under this section [Subsection (e)], the commissioner shall rely on research-based mentoring programs that, through external evaluation, have demonstrated success.

(f) A mentor teacher must 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. The mentoring sessions must address the following topics:

(1) orientation to the context, policies, and practices of the school district;

(2) data-driven instructional practices;

(3) specific instructional coaching cycles, including coaching regarding conferences between parents and the classroom teacher;

(4) professional development; and

(5) professional expectations.

(g) A school district must:

(1) designate a specific time during the school day for meetings between mentor teachers and classroom teachers assigned to a mentor; and

(2) schedule release time or a reduced teaching load for mentor teachers and classroom teachers under this section to facilitate mentoring activities, including classroom observations or participation in supportive coaching.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 42, Education Code, is amended.

SECTION 3. Section 21.458(c), Education Code, is repealed.

SECTION 4. This Act applies beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-

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SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 3. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 4. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 5. Same as introduced version.

thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2017.