

- SUBJECT:** Requiring districts to apply TEKS standards to the enrichment curriculum
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Grusendorf, Oliveira, Branch, Dawson, Eissler, Griggs, Hochberg, Madden
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Dutton
- WITNESSES:** For — Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Holly Eaton, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; JoHannah Whitsett, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Frank Coachman, Texas Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance; Betsy Cornwell, Texas Educational Theatre Association and Center for Educator Development in the Fine Arts; Kristen Marstaller, Texas Art Education Association; John May, Texas Music Administrators Conference; Tom Leyden, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals; Nathan Bond, Texas Foreign Language Association; Robert Floyd, Texas Music Educators Association and Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 28.002 sets forth guidelines for the required curriculum for school districts that offer kindergarten through grade 12. A foundation curriculum must include English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. An enrichment curriculum must include foreign languages to the extent possible, health, physical education, fine arts, economics, career and technology education, and technology applications.
- Section 28.002©) requires the State Board of Education (SBOE), with the direct participation of educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers, to identify by rule the Texas essential knowledge and skills (TEKS) of each subject of the foundation curriculum that all students should be able to demonstrate and that will be used in evaluating textbooks and addressed on assessment tests. As a condition of

accreditation, each district must provide instruction in the TEKS at appropriate grade levels.

Section 28.002(d) requires the SBOE, after consulting with educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers, to identify by rule the TEKS of each subject in the enrichment curriculum that all students should be able to demonstrate. Each district must use the TEKS as guidelines in providing instruction in the enrichment curriculum.

Section 28.025 requires all students to enroll in either the recommended or advanced high school curriculum in order to earn a high school diploma, unless they or their parents and a school counselor agree that they should take the minimum high school program.

DIGEST: HB 2908 would require the use of the TEKS in all subjects of the required curriculum as a condition of accreditation.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2003.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 2908 would upgrade accreditation standards by requiring districts to use the TEKS when providing instruction in the enrichment curriculum. Currently, districts must use the TEKS only as guidelines for fine arts and music instruction as well as for health, foreign languages, economics, and other subjects within the enrichment curriculum. If a course is important enough to be part of the required curriculum, it is important enough to require districts to follow state standards when providing instruction for it.

Since the recommended high school program is now the default graduation plan for the state, most students are required to take several enrichment courses to graduate. Further, many colleges require foreign languages or look for student accomplishments in fine arts or music. For high school students who are taking an advanced curriculum in preparation for college, up to 40 percent of the courses required for graduation could be enrichment subjects. As the state raises standards for students, it also should raise standards for districts by requiring compliance with the TEKS for all required classes as a condition of accreditation.

HB 2908 would ensure that students received equitable access to enrichment curriculum instruction across the state. Requiring the use of TEKS as a guiding standard would ensure that all students received rigorous and sequential instruction in the enrichment curriculum. This would keep all kids on a level playing field, even when transferring to another district.

The bill would bring state standards for required curriculum in line with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which lists core academic subjects as English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Under current state law, districts are under no mandated state standards for instruction in three of these subjects — foreign languages, the arts, and economics. This bill would align state and federal law in this regard.

HB 2908 would preserve local control while upholding state standards. Local districts would maintain control over how instruction was delivered, what materials were used, what teaching methods were used, and how much instructional time was devoted to a subject. The TEKS merely provide a standard for what students should know and should be able to do within certain subject areas.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

SB 815 by Van de Putte, the identical companion bill to HB 2908, was heard in the Senate Education Committee on May 6.