

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 425
By: Barrientos
Education
3-30-97
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, while no legislation exists for intensive reading programs for students, statistics indicate that approximately 180,000 students in grades K-3 will fail the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test. Some believe that intensive reading intervention programs are cost effective and help the state in improving student performance on the TAAS test. This bill creates an intensive reading program for certain public school students in need of such instruction.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 425 creates an intensive reading program for certain public school students in need of such instruction.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 29.354, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Subchapter J, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. INTENSIVE READING PROGRAMS

Sec. 29.351. DEFINITION. Defines "student in need of intensive reading instruction."

Sec. 29.352. INTENSIVE READING PROGRAM GRANT ACCOUNT. Provides that the intensive reading program grant account consists of money appropriated for intensive reading programs in public schools under this chapter. Authorizes the Texas Education Agency (agency) to accept private donations for the account. Requires the agency to administer the account.

Sec. 29.353. GRANTS. Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to make grants from the intensive reading program grant account to eligible school districts. Authorizes a district to use a grant only to provide intensive reading instruction to students needing the instruction.

Sec. 29.354. ELIGIBILITY; APPLICATION. Requires a school district, to be eligible for a grant, to submit an application to the commissioner for funding of an intensive reading program meeting certain guidelines. Requires the commissioner to adopt research-based guidelines and sets forth requirements for a school district applying for a grant. Requires the commissioner to encourage innovation in developing and applying the guidelines, and prohibits the guidelines from prescribing a particular reading methodology or curriculum. Requires the commissioner to approve or disapprove each application and to notify the school district of the commissioner's decision.

Sec. 29.355. AMOUNT OF GRANT. Sets forth a formula for a grant for a district whose application is approved. Defines variables of the grant formula.

Sec. 29.356. GRANT RENEWAL. Authorizes the commissioner to renew a grant for the following school year. Authorizes the commissioner to renew a school district's grant only under certain conditions.

Sec. 29.357. PROGRAM EVALUATION. Requires the agency to annually evaluate the effectiveness of intensive reading instruction programs that receive grants under this subchapter. Requires the agency to disseminate information to school districts showing which intensive reading instruction programs are the most effective.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 39.182(a), Education Code, to require the agency to prepare and deliver to certain officials a report containing, among other information, an evaluation of intensive reading programs for which grants are made under Chapter 29J, Education Code. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 39.185, Education Code, to make a conforming change.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.