

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
76R15878 CAS-D

C.S.H.B. 2307
By: Keffer (Sibley)
Education
5/13/1999
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

This bill would create a staff development account in the general revenue fund and would authorize the commissioner of education to allocate funds from the account to provide staff development resources to a district that is rated academically unacceptable, has one or more low-performing campuses, or otherwise needs assistance.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 2307 creates a staff development account in the general revenue fund to provide assistance to certain low-performing school districts.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the commissioner of education in SECTIONS 1 and 3 (Sections 21.410(c), (d), (f) and (m), and 21.453(d), Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 21I, Education Code, by adding Section 21.410, as follows:

Sec. 21.410. MASTER READING TEACHER GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish a master reading teacher grant program.

(b) Requires the commissioner to make grants to, from funds appropriated for the purpose, school districts to pay stipends to selected certified master reading teachers (master teachers) who teach at high-need campuses.

(c) Requires the commissioner to identify each high-need campus in a school district using criteria established by commissioner by rule. Requires the commissioner to use the criteria to rank campuses in order of greatest need.

(d) Authorizes a school district to apply to the commissioner for grants to each high-need campus identified by the commissioner to be used to pay stipends to master teachers. Provides that each grant is in the amount of \$5,000, unless reduced under Subsection (g) or (i). Requires the commissioner to approve an application for a grant if a district meets certain requirements regarding rules adopted by the commissioner.

(e) Provides that a stipend under Subsection (d)(2) is in the amount of \$5,000.

(f) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules for the distribution of grants to school districts following the year of the initial grant. Provides that a school district that has been approved for a grant to pay a stipend to a master teacher is not required to reapply for a grant for two consecutive years following the initial year of the grant if the district meets certain requirements.

(g) Sets forth provisions regarding payments to school districts and the distribution of stipends.

(h) Provides that a grant a school district receives under this section is in addition to any funding the district receives under Chapter 42. Requires the commissioner to distribute funds under this section with the Foundation School Program payment to which the district is entitled as soon as practicable after the end of the school year as determined by the commissioner. Entitles a school

district to which Chapter 41 applies to a grant paid under this section. Requires the commissioner to determine the timing of the distribution of grants to a district that does not receive Foundation School Program payments.

(i) Provides that this section does not create a property right to a grant or stipend. Entitles a school district to a grant to carry out the purposes of this section only to the extent the commissioner makes the grant in accordance with this section and only to the extent sufficient state funds are appropriated for those purposes. Sets forth procedures to reduce grants paid in instances where appropriated state funds are insufficient to fund a grant.

(j) Provides that a decision of the commissioner concerning the amount of money to which a school district is entitled under this section is final and may not be appealed. Requires each school district to provide the commissioner with acceptable proof of a master teacher's certification.

(k) Authorizes the commissioner to audit the expenditure of money appropriated for the purposes of this section. Requires a school district's use of such money to be verified as part of the district under Section 44.008.

(l) Provides that a stipend a teacher receives under this section is not considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary under Section 21.402.

(m) Authorizes the commissioner to adopt other rules as necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 21B, Education Code, by adding Section 21.0481, as follows:

Sec. 21.0481. MASTER READING TEACHER CERTIFICATION. Requires the State Board for Educator Certification (board) to establish a master reading teacher certificate. Requires the board to issue a master reading teacher certificate to each eligible person. Sets forth criteria for eligibility for a master reading teacher certificate.

SECTION 3. Amends Chapter 21J, Education Code, by adding Section 21.453, as follows:

Sec. 21.453. STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT. Provides that the staff development account (account) is an account in the general revenue fund. Sets forth the composition of the account. Authorizes the funds in the account to be used only as provided by this section. Authorizes the commissioner to allocate funds from the account to regional education service centers to provide staff development resources to school districts that are rated academically acceptable; have one or more campuses rated as low-performing; or are otherwise in need of assistance, as determined by the commissioner. Requires a school district that receives resources under this section to pay to the commissioner for deposit in the account an amount equal to one-half of the cost of the resources provided to the district. Authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules governing the allocation and use of funds under this section.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 39.075(c), Education Code, to authorize the commissioner to take action under Sections 39.131(a)(1) through (8) if the commissioner determines that the action is necessary to improve any aspect of a district's performance, regardless of whether the commissioner lowers the district's accreditation rating.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 822.201(b), Government Code, to redefine "salary and wages." Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 6. Requires the board to propose rules establishing requirements and prescribing an examination for master reading teacher certification not later than January 1, 2001.

SECTION 7. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.