

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
76R8449 KKA-D

S.B. 955
By: Bivins
Education
4/6/1999
As Filed

DIGEST

Last session, Governor George W. Bush launched the Texas Reading Initiative. The Ready to Read Initiative complements the Texas Reading Initiative by targeting low-income preschool children and equipping them with pre-reading skills needed for long-term academic success. This bill would establish a competitive grant program designed to allow a public or private preschool to provide scientific, research-based pre-reading instruction designed to improve student's pre-reading skills and also to identify cost-effective models for pre-reading instruction.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 955 requires the commissioner of education to make grants in support of pre-reading instruction.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Sections 29.155(c) and (f), Chapter 29E, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 29E, Education Code, by adding Section 29.155, as follows:

Sec. 29.155. **READY TO READ GRANTS.** Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to make grants in support of pre-reading instruction. Requires the commissioner to establish a competitive grant program for the distribution of at least 95 percent of the available appropriated funds. Requires grants to be used to provide pre-reading instruction for certain purposes. Requires the commissioner to distribute grants to be used for certain purposes in amounts no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$150,000. Provides entities that provide preschool instruction, meet qualifications prescribed by the commissioner, and have a student body of which 75 percent of students enrolled are low-income students as determined by rule of the commissioner, and are entitled to apply for a grant. Requires the commissioner to develop and implement performance measures which must correlate with other reading assessments used in public schools for kindergarten through the second grade, for evaluating the effectiveness of grants under this section. Authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules for the administration of this section. Authorizes the commissioner to expend from funds appropriated, no more than three percent the first fiscal year and one percent each fiscal year thereafter for the administration of the program. Authorizes the commissioner to expend from funds appropriated, no more than two percent the first fiscal year and four percent in each fiscal year thereafter for evaluating the program.

SECTION 2. Requires the commissioner of education to administer the grant program in a manner consistent with other reading programs identified as components of the governor's reading program.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 1999.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.