

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1576
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The move to end-of-course examinations in high school for Algebra I and II and geometry will require students to demonstrate higher levels of mathematics knowledge than do the current comprehensive Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills mathematics exams. Unfortunately, many students enter high school underprepared to develop algebraic reasoning. There are many reasons for this, including inadequate preparation of numbers and number concepts in the primary and intermediate grades, poor understanding of rational numbers and related mathematical knowledge (i.e., fractions, decimals, proportional reasoning), weaknesses in teacher preparation to teach mathematics, and a disposition towards low self-expectations in mathematics.

As proposed, S.B. 1576 establishes an algebra instruction grant program for schools that have a disproportionate number of students performing at an unsatisfactory level on mathematics assessments in grades five through seven. This bill requires the commissioner of education to develop a comprehensive, research-based intervention plan to assist the districts that receive the grant. The bill requires grants to support sustained improvement in the school's pre-algebra mathematics instruction in grades six through eight. This bill allows districts to use grant funds to train and pay state intervention coaches, provide training and instructional materials in pre-algebra skills, provide professional development to middle school mathematics teachers, provide flexibility in the school day for instruction, and to use technology.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 29.092, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Section 29.092, as follows:

Sec. 29.092. ALGEBRA INSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish a program under which grants are awarded to school districts to implement an algebra instruction program from funds appropriated for that purpose. Prohibits the commissioner from using more than \$50 million for the grant program provided by this section from the funds appropriated for use under Section 28.0211 (Satisfactory Performance on Assessment Instruments Required; Accelerated Instruction).

(b) Requires the commissioner to develop a comprehensive intervention plan to assist school districts with a disproportionate number of students who fail to perform satisfactorily on the assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023(a)(1) (regarding assessment instruments in mathematics) in grades five through seven. Requires that the plan be based on high-quality research.

(c) Requires the commissioner to establish application criteria for receiving a grant under this section. Requires that the criteria require a school district that applies for a grant to submit a local intervention plan that meets the standards adopted by the commissioner. Requires the commissioner, in awarding grants under this section, to give preference to districts with the lowest rate of

satisfactory performance on assessment instruments administered under Section 39.023(a)(1) in grades five through seven.

(d) Requires that a grant under this section support sustained improvement in the school district's pre-algebra mathematics instruction in grades six through eight, and target students who will be administered the Algebra I end-of-course assessment instrument beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

(e) Authorizes a grant awarded under this section to be used for providing:

(1) training and payment of state intervention coaches to assist school districts in implementing the grant;

(2) training and instructional materials in pre-algebra skills in grades five through seven;

(3) professional development of mathematics teachers assigned to grades five through seven;

(4) flexibility in the school day for instruction;

(5) instructional services; and

(6) technology as part of instructional activities.

(f) Authorizes the commissioner to condition a grant on the implementation of the comprehensive intervention plan and to withhold or recover any funds not spent as provided by the plan approved under Subsection (b). Provides that a decision of the commissioner under this subsection is final and is prohibited from being appealed.

(g) Authorizes the commissioner to require a school district to make financial and other commitments as part of a grant application and to continue those commitments for not more than two school years after the final school year for which the grant applies.

(h) Requires the commissioner to establish guidelines for implementing the grant program and adopt rules necessary to administer the grant program.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.