

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
82R22131 VOO-D

C.S.S.B. 866
By: Deuell
Education
4/13/2011
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Educators are not adequately instructed on how to detect or educate students with dyslexia. Individuals enrolling in public schools are not always tested for dyslexia and therefore never have access to the treatment and learning tools that would facilitate their education. When their children enter the school system, parents are not sufficiently educated on the characteristics of dyslexia and the students who are diagnosed do not have many tools that accommodate their learning.

Currently, no stipulations are made as to how teachers will be instructed on the detection of students with dyslexia or how to most effectively teach those students. Dyslexia testing for individuals who enroll in the public school system is required only at select times and students do not always have access to treatment or learning tools that ease their education process.

The recommendations included in this bill were part of the report of the Interim Committee on Dyslexia and Related Disorders.

C.S.S.B. 866 amends current law relating to the education of public school students with dyslexia, the education and training of educators who teach students with dyslexia, and the assessment of students with dyslexia attending an institution of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 21.044, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 21.044. EDUCATOR PREPARATION. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Makes no further changes.

(b) Requires that any minimum academic qualifications for a certificate specified under Subsection (a) that require a person to possess a bachelor's degree to also require that the person receive, as part of the curriculum for that degree, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia. Provides that this subsection does not apply to a person who obtains a certificate through an alternative certification program adopted under Section 21.049.

(c) Requires that the instruction under Subsection (b):

(1) be developed by a panel of experts in the diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia who are:

(A) employed by institutions of higher education; and

(B) approved by the State Board for Educator Certification; and

(2) include information on:

(A) characteristics of dyslexia;

(B) identification of dyslexia; and

(C) effective, multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 21.054, Education Code, by adding Subsections (b) and (c), as follows:

(b) Requires that continuing education requirements for an educator who teaches students with dyslexia include training regarding new research and practices in educating students with dyslexia.

(c) Authorizes the training required under Subsection (b) to be offered in an online course.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 38.003, Education Code, by adding Subsection (b-1) to prohibit a student determined to have dyslexia during testing under Subsection (a) (relating to being tested for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times) or accommodated because of dyslexia, unless otherwise provided by law, from being retested for dyslexia for the purpose of reassessing the student's need for accommodations until the district reevaluates the information obtained from previous testing of the student.

SECTION 4. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 38, Education Code, by adding Section 38.0031, as follows:

Sec. 38.0031. CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA. (a) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish a committee to develop a plan for integrating technology into the classroom to help accommodate students with dyslexia. Requires that the plan:

(1) determine the classroom technologies that are useful and practical in assisting public schools in accommodating students with dyslexia, considering budget constraints of school districts; and

(2) develop a strategy for providing those effective technologies to students.

(b) Requires TEA to provide the plan and information about the availability and benefits of the technologies identified under Subsection (a)(1) to school districts.

(c) Provides that a member of the committee established under Subsection (a) is not entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred by the member under this section unless agency funds are available for that purpose.

SECTION 5. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.9701, as follows:

Sec. 51.9701. ASSESSMENT FOR DYSLEXIA. Prohibits an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, unless otherwise provided by law, from reassessing a student determined to have dyslexia for the purpose of assessing the student's need for accommodations until the institution of higher education reevaluates the information obtained from previous assessments of the student.

SECTION 6. (a) Provides that, except as provided by Subsections (b) and (c) of this section, this Act applies beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

(b) Provides that Section 21.044(b), Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with persons who commence enrollment in an institution of higher education during the 2011-2012 academic year.

(c) Provides that Section 51.9701, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year.

SECTION 7. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.