

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 925
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Without proficient reading and comprehension skills, every other school subject is nearly incomprehensible. Problematically, many students are not reading at a satisfactory level. Teacher quality is widely considered the most important school-related variable in improving student performance; accordingly, teachers must be afforded the resources, training, and tools needed to make a difference in their young students' lives.

The state should provide funding to establish Literacy Achievement Academies, based on similar professional development created as a part of former Governor Bush's Texas Reading Initiative. The academies would support teacher training and the implementation of scientific, research-based programs that support students in their reading development in the primary grades.

S.B. 925 directs the Texas Education Agency Commission to develop and make available literacy achievement academies for teachers of kindergarten, first, second, or third grade students.

As proposed, S.B. 925 amends current law relating to providing training academies for public school teachers who provide reading instruction to students in kindergarten through grade three.

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 Subchapter J, Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Section 21.4552, as follows:

Sec. 21.4552. TEACHER LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT ACADEMIES. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to develop and make available literacy achievement academies for teachers who provide instruction to students at the kindergarten or first, second, or third grade level.

(b) Requires a literacy achievement academy developed under this section to include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

(c) Requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selecting teachers who may attend a literacy achievement academy. Requires the commissioner, in adopting selection criteria under this subsection, to require granting a priority to teachers employed by school districts in which 50 percent or more of the students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged.

(d) Entitles a teacher who attends a literacy achievement academy to receive a stipend in the amount determined by the commissioner from funds appropriated for that purpose. Provides that a stipend received under this subsection is not

considered in determining whether a district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary under Section 21.402 (Minimum Service Required).

(e) Requires regional education service centers, on request of the commissioner, to assist the commissioner and the Texas Education Agency with training and other activities relating to the development and operation of literacy achievement academies.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.