

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 934
By: Kolkhorst; West
Education
6/2/2015
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Over the next 10 years, employers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields will require one million more graduates with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics than U.S. colleges and universities are on track to produce. Mathematics is the foundational skill for nearly all STEM pathways; however, in 2013, only seven percent of Texas fourth graders achieved an “Advanced” score on the NAEP mathematics assessment, and 34 percent scored at “Proficient.” The remaining 59 percent scored at “Basic” or below.

Young learners in every setting should experience mathematics through effective, research-based curricula and teaching practices. This, in turn, requires that teachers have the support of policies, organizational structures, and resources that enable them to succeed in this challenging and important work. Leveraging existing and proven research and resources, the state should develop Math and Technology Academies for teachers in grades K-3 that mirror the Reading Academies first implemented under Governor Bush’s Texas Reading Initiative.

S.B. 934 directs the Texas Education Agency to develop mathematics achievement academies for teachers who provide mathematics instruction to students in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade.

S.B. 934 amends current law relating to providing training academies for public school teachers who provide mathematics 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 21.4553, as follows:

Sec. 21.4553. TEACHER MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT ACADEMIES (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to develop and make available mathematics achievement academies for teachers who provide mathematics instruction to students at the kindergarten or first, second, or third grade level.

(b) Requires a mathematics achievement academy developed under this section to include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in mathematics, including problem solving, the place value system, whole number operations, and fractions.

(c) Requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selecting teachers who may attend a mathematics achievement academy. Requires the commissioner, in adopting selection criteria under this subsection, to:

(1) require granting a priority to teachers employed by a school district at a campus at which 50 percent or more of the students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged; and

(2) provide a process through which a teacher not employed at a campus described by Subdivision (1) may attend the academy if the academy has available space and the school district employing the teacher pays the costs of the teacher's attendance.

(d) Entitles a teacher who attends a mathematics achievement academy, from funds appropriated for that purpose, to receive a stipend in the amount determined by the commissioner. 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 Salary Schedule For Certain Professional Staff).

(e) Requires regional education services 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 mathematics achievement academies.

(f) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2027.

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