

SUBJECT: Relating to public school accountability

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Sadler, Dunnam, Grusendorf, Hardcastle, Hochberg, Oliveira, Smith  
1 nay — Olivo  
1 absent — Dutton

WITNESSES: For — None  
Against — None  
On — David Anderson, Texas Education Agency

BACKGROUND: Education Code, ch. 39 sets forth guidelines for public school accountability in Texas, including guidelines for assessment of academic skills, performance indicators, accreditation status, and successful school awards.

DIGEST: CSHB 1144 would amend the public school accountability system in a number of ways, including the creation of:

- ! seamless records of student performance from kindergarten through college;
- ! standardized end-of-course assessment instruments that would allow for comparison with other states, including a specific assessment for Algebra; and
- ! voluntary gold performance ratings for high-performing campuses.

**Coordination of Records.** CSHB 1144 would require the education commissioner and the higher education commissioner to ensure that student performance records held by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) were coordinated and maintained in standardized, compatible formats that permitted exchange of information between the agencies and matching of student records so that a

student's academic performance could be assessed throughout the student's educational career.

**End-of-course assessments.** The commissioner could participate in multistate efforts to develop standardized end-of-course assessment instruments and could require a district to administer an end-of-course assessment developed through multistate efforts. The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee of a student in a special education program would determine whether any modification were necessary in administering an end-of-course assessment and whether the student should be exempted. SBOE could not modify this provision, but each assessment would have to be reliable, valid, and meet applicable federal requirements.

The commissioner would have to develop a standardized end-of-course assessment for Algebra I and could require by rule that a district administered an Algebra I end-of-course assessment. The ARD committee of a student in a special education program would determine whether any modification were necessary in administering an end-of-course assessment and whether the student should be exempted.

**Voluntary gold performance rating program.** The commissioner, in consultation with an advisory committee, would have to develop a voluntary gold performance rating program ("program") based on enhanced performance. TEA would have to administer the program, which would permit campuses recognized as exemplary to apply to TEA for an exemplary gold rating. The bill would permit a district or campus that was rated recognized to apply for a recognized gold rating, and a district or campus that was rated academically-acceptable to apply for an academically-acceptable gold rating.

The bill would recommend that performance standards on which a voluntary gold performance rating was based should include:

- ! student proficiency on end-of-course exams, and other measures of proficiency determined by the commissioner;
- ! student performance on one or more nationally recognized norm-referenced assessment instruments;
- ! improvement in student performance;

- ! in the case of middle or junior high schools, student proficiency in math, including algebra; and
- ! in the case of high schools, the extent to which graduates were academically prepared to attend institutions of higher education; and
- ! the percentage of students who took advanced placement tests and student performance on those tests.

An advisory committee would be created to assist the commissioner in developing the program. The seven-member committee would be appointed by the commissioner and would consist of two public school teachers, two public school administrators, and three people with experience in public school accountability. The commissioner would have to appoint the committee not later than March 1, 2002.

The commissioner could adopt rules as necessary to implement and administer the program, including rules establishing application procedures and forms. The commissioner would have to complete development of the program and adopt any necessary rules not later than March 30, 2006.

TEA would have to implement the program beginning with the 2006-2007 school year or an earlier school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2001.

SUPPORTERS  
SAY:

**End-of-course assessments.** Development of end-of-course assessments would help to ensure that a diploma from a Texas high school was meaningful. Employers are looking for certain skills in high school graduates, and end-of-course exams would bolster employer confidence in the value of a Texas high school diploma.

**Voluntary gold performance rating program.** The voluntary gold rating would be the Texas equivalent of the national blue ribbon designation. A higher standard is necessary to give schools something to strive for and help move campuses forward.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

**Coordination of records.** The bill does not go far enough. It also should require coordination with early childhood data, such as student records from pre-kindergarten programs.

**End-of-course assessments.** Texas should not participate in multistate end-of-course exam development. Texas end-of-course exams should be based strictly on the TEKS curriculum, which other states do not use.

**Voluntary gold performance rating program.** The bill does not contain enough guidelines to ensure that the voluntary gold performance program would not overshadow or otherwise weaken the existing campus rating process.

NOTES:

The committee substitute required the commissioner to adopt a standardized Algebra I end-of-course assessment. The substitute removed provisions relating to a declaration of emergency status at low-performing campuses and campus bonus allotments.