

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1302
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1302 seeks to reduce state-required assessment testing for grades three through eight. This bill complements the state requirements that are currently federally required, therefore eliminating the writing and social studies STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness).

Many teachers, parents, and students have expressed concerns regarding having to focus school curriculum that "teaches to the test." Additionally, many school days are spent on taking practice tests to prepare for these examinations. The levels of pressure students are currently under in regards to standardized testing is creating an environment of stress not conducive to a successful learning atmosphere. Compared to other states, Texas has some of the most burdensome test requirements in the nation. Reducing the amount of state-required exams will help alleviate the anxiety students have because of over testing.

By limiting the number of tests for third through eighth graders, teachers will have more time to teach the necessary curriculum instead of spending time preparing for standardized testing, not to mention the time of the actual testing. Furthermore, if the federal government moves off of End of Course (EOC) testing, then the state can follow suit.

As proposed, S.B. 1302 amends current law relating to limiting certain state-required assessment instruments administered to public school students in certain grades to assessments required by federal law.

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 39.023(a), Education Code, as effective until on or before September 1, 2015, as follows:

(a) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to adopt or develop appropriate criterion-referenced assessment instruments designed to assess essential knowledge and skills in subjects for which assessment is required by federal law, rather than knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and sciences. Requires all students, other than students assessed under Subsection (b) or (l) or exempted under Section 39.027 (Exemption), except as provided by Subsection (a-2) (providing that a student is not required to be assessed in a subject otherwise assessed at the student's grade level under certain circumstances), to be assessed in any subject and grade required by federal law.

Deletes existing Subdivisions (1)-(6) requiring all students, other than students assessed under Subsection (b) or (l) or exempted under Section 39.027, except as provided by Subsection (a-2), to be assessed in mathematics, annually in grades three through seven without the aid of technology and in grade eight with the aid of technology on any assessment instrument that includes algebra; reading, annually in grades three through

eight; writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades four and seven; social studies, in grade eight; science, in grades five and eight; and any other subject and grade required by federal law.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 39.023(a), Education Code, as effective on or before September 1, 2015, as follows:

(a) Requires TEA to adopt or develop appropriate criterion-referenced assessment instruments designed to assess essential knowledge and skills in subjects for which assessment is required by federal law, rather than knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and sciences. Requires all students, other than students assessed under Subsection (b) or (l) or exempted under Section 39.027, except as provided by Subsection (a-2), to be assessed in any subject and grade required by federal law.

Deletes existing Subdivisions (1)-(5) requiring all students, other than students assessed under Subsection (b) or (l) or exempted under Section 39.027, except as provided by Subsection (a-2), to be assessed in mathematics, in grades three and five without the aid of technology and in grade eight with the aid of technology on any assessment instrument that includes algebra; reading, in grades three, five, and eight; writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades four and seven; social studies, in grade eight, and science, in grades five and eight.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 39.023(a), Education Code, as effective September 1, 2017, as follows:

(a) Requires TEA to adopt or develop appropriate criterion-referenced assessment instruments designed to assess essential knowledge and skills in subjects for which assessment is required by federal law, rather than knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and sciences. Requires all students, other than students assessed under Subsection (b) or (l) or exempted under Section 39.027, except as provided by Subsection (a-2), to be assessed in any subject and grade required by federal law.

Deletes existing Subdivisions (1)-(6) requiring all students, other than students assessed under Subsection (b) or (l) or exempted under Section 39.027, except as provided by Subsection (a-2), to be assessed in mathematics, annually in grades three through seven without the aid of technology and in grade eight with the aid of technology on any assessment instrument that includes algebra; reading, annually in grades three through eight; writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades four and seven; social studies, in grade eight; science, in grades five and eight; and any other subject and grade required by federal law.

SECTION 4. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.