

- SUBJECT:** Restricting written reports required of public school classroom teachers
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Sadler, Dutton, Dunnam, Hardcastle, Oliveira, Olivo  
2 nays — Grusendorf, Smith  
1 absent — Hochberg
- WITNESSES:** For — Holly Eaton, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Marjorie Wall, Texas State Teachers Association  
  
Against — Marty De Leon, Texas Association of School Boards; Archie McAtee, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals
- BACKGROUND:** SB 1, enacted by the 74th Legislature in 1995, amended the Education Code to repeal the Paper Work Reduction Act of 1986, which attempted to reduce the requirements for written reports by classroom teachers. SB 1 also eliminated State Board of Education's (SBOE) authority to adopt rules related to this Act.
- DIGEST:** HB 106 would add sec. 21.411 to the Education Code to require the board of trustees of each school district to adopt a policy limiting redundant requests for information and the number and length of written reports a classroom teacher was required to prepare. The bill would not require a classroom teacher to prepare written reports, except the following:
- ! a report of a student's grade on a particular assignment or examination;
  - ! a report of a student's grades at the end of a grade reporting period;
  - ! a textbook report;
  - ! a unit or weekly lesson plan report that outlines, in a brief and general manner, the information to be presented during each period at the secondary level or in each subject or topic at the elementary level;
  - ! an attendance report;
  - ! a report required for accreditation review;
  - ! any other report specifically required by law or SBOE rule to be prepared by a classroom teacher; or

- ! any other report directly related to the professional duties of a classroom teacher.

If information was required under federal or state law, regulation, or rule and the only reasonable way to collect the information was with the direct involvement of a classroom teacher, the teacher could be required to provide the information.

The bill would require that the board of trustees review paperwork requirements imposed on teachers and transfer to non-instructional staff any reporting task that reasonably could be accomplished by that staff.

This legislation would not preclude a school district from collecting essential information, in addition to information previously specified, if:

- ! participation were entirely at the discretion of the teacher, and the school district did not directly or indirectly coerce the teacher to participate;
- ! the decision not to participate were not held against the teacher; and
- ! the commissioner promptly investigated any allegation of the misuse of voluntary information-gathering procedures that burdened a teacher and circumvented compliance with the statutory intent for paperwork reduction.

This bill would take effect immediately and would apply beginning with the 2001-2002 school year.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

Since the repeal of the Paperwork Reduction Act, teachers increasingly have complained of burdensome, needlessly detailed, or duplicative paperwork. This legislation would restrict the number of written reports required of classroom teachers and would send a message to school officials that the Legislature expects teachers to spend more time teaching students and less time laboring over superfluous written reports.

If a federal or state law, regulation, or rule required information that could only be obtained with the direct involvement of a classroom teacher, the teacher still could be called upon to provide that information. This provision would protect school administrators who must ask teachers for a report

because it is required by federal or state law, often at the request of the SBOE.

Having boards of trustees review paperwork requirements imposed on teachers and using clerical staff to accomplish these tasks, whenever reasonable, would be an appropriate remedy for reducing paperwork and reinforcing teachers' instructional goals in the classroom.

HB 106 would not preclude a school district from collecting essential information in addition to that specified in the bill, if gathering the extra information were at the discretion of the teacher and if the school district did not in any way coerce the teacher to participate. Further, the commissioner would have to investigate any allegations of the misuse of voluntary information-gathering efforts.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

This bill would impose inflexible paperwork standards for the boards of trustees of each school district. It would unduly restrict what types of written reports could be requested of teachers. Often principals need a range of information in order to make professional decisions. School boards should not be forced to hinder principals' abilities to run local campuses.

**NOTES:**

An identical bill, HB 87 by Gutierrez, passed the House during the 76th Legislature in 1999, but died in the Senate Education Committee.