

SUBJECT: Repealing certain mandatory professional development plans for principals

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Eissler, Hochberg, Allen, Aycock, Farias, Jackson, Patrick, Shelton

0 nays

3 absent — Dutton, Olivo, Weber

WITNESSES: For — Daniel Coward, Dana West, Amarillo Independent School District; Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Myra Klinksiek, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators; Jackie Lain, Texas Association of School Boards)

Against — Mary Cauble, Tarleton School Leadership Alliance

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 21.054(b) requires that at least every five years a principal be assessed on the knowledge, skills, and proficiencies necessary to be a principal and an initialized professional growth plan for the principal be developed. This section also provides an extension of the timeframe for periodic assessments for principals who serve in the military. Principals must be assessed on:

- instructional leadership;
- administrative, supervision, and communication skills;
- curriculum and instruction management;
- performance evaluation;
- organization; and
- fiscal management.

The assessment results and the growth plan may not be released unless the principal being assessed grants approval.

DIGEST: HB 200 would repeal Education Code, sec. 21.054(b), requiring principal assessment every five years and an initialized professional growth plan.

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, 2009, and apply beginning in the 2009-10 school year.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 200 would repeal a well-intentioned program that did not provide the anticipated results. The evaluation process does not lead to principal performance improvement. Programs are not relevant to the specific needs of a specific school year or campus, training occurs in isolation of the work environment, and the lack of follow-up make these programs ineffective. A principal's supervisor may not view the results of the assessment, so has no guidance to address a principal's strengths and weaknesses. The bill would clear the way for more sensible professional development methods.

The bill would save school districts money because the evaluation process is expensive. Principals must leave campus to participate in the assessment and professional development; school districts must pay travel and workshop expenses; and small schools and school districts are left short-staffed because they do not have the multiple principals that larger schools do. School districts estimate that each assessment costs between \$500 and \$1,200. This money should be used to raise student achievement.

School districts do not need this law to be able to assess principals and develop professional development plans. If a school district has a successful program in place, it would not be discontinued as a result of enactment of this bill. The accountability system provides enough incentive for principals to get professional development; the cost is high compared to the other needs of schools. This bill would not decrease the quality of principals or the level of professional development principals receive, because if they do not continue programs on their own accord, it would show through the principal's job performance and accountability ratings.

The current requirement that a principal complete 200 hours of continuing education to be certified as a principal would not change. A principal by nature is a person who enjoys learning and would seek education and collaboration with other principals without a state mandate. HB 200 would allow principals to be held accountable without wasting money.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

HB 200 should not repeal, but should modify, the program to enhance the effectiveness of the assessment and professional development process for school principals. The program should encourage principals to share best practices amongst themselves. The assessment results of a principal should be accessible to the principal's superintendent to enhance the capacity for improvement.

HB 200 would repeal a program that identifies areas that need improvement and demonstrates to school district officials and principals which skills correlate positively with accountability ratings. The assessment is not for contract purposes and therefore can only help a principal.

Claims that this program is ineffective due to lack of follow-up are unfounded, because certain school districts have developed programs in which a principal is assessed, a professional development plan is created, and six weeks later the professional development plan is assessed. The process and the professional development plan create a cohesive effort to strengthen principal performance and overall campus performance.

NOTES:

The LBB estimates that this bill could reduce administrative costs for school districts, with the reductions varying based on local circumstances.

During consideration of HB 3 by Eissler, the school accountability bill, on April 29, the House adopted a floor amendment that also would repeal Education Code, sec. 21.054(b).