

- SUBJECT:** Certification, continuing education, and appraisal of teachers
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Eissler, Aycock, Huberty, Shelton, T. Smith, Weber
1 nay — Allen
4 absent — Hochberg, Dutton, Guillen, Strama
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 28 — 23 – 8 (Davis, Ellis, Gallegos, Hinojosa, Uresti, Van de Putte, Watson, Zaffirini)
- WITNESSES:** For — Jerel Booker, Stand for Children; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Andrew Erben, TIER; Rebecca Flores, Houston ISD; Nelson Salinas, Texas Association of Business; David Thompson; Amber Welsh)

Against — Jennifer Canaday, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Melva Cardenas, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators; Holly Eaton, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Eric Hartman, Texas AFT; Richard Kouri TSTA; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ann Smisko, TEA)
- BACKGROUND:** The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) prescribes a comprehensive examination for each class of certificate issued by the board. SBEC identifies continuing education courses and programs that fulfill educators' continuing education requirements.

The recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers are based on observable job-related behavior, include an evaluation of a teacher's implementation of discipline procedures, and consider student performance. Appraisals include distinct categories of professional skills and characteristics with a rating for each category. A conference between the teacher and the appraiser is required to be diagnostic and must prescribe any remediation needed in overall

performance and by category. An appraiser must be the teacher's supervisor or a person approved by the board of trustees.

DIGEST:

CSSB 4 would require SBEC to implement an appraisal and accountability system for continuing education courses and monitor the quality of all continuing education courses.

Comprehensive examinations. CSSB 4 would require SBEC to prescribe a comprehensive examination on which a person would have to perform satisfactorily to be certified to teach early childhood through fourth grade classes. The examination would include components in reading, language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. The reading component would have to include material covering the science of reading.

Minimum scoring standard. SBEC would have to by rule provide a minimum scoring standard that would demonstrate satisfactory performance and content mastery for the cumulative score and each component area. The minimum standard for the cumulative score would have to be greater than the total of the proposed minimum scoring standard for each component.

Educator appraisal. The board would have to adopt a new recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers that would have to include a measurement of teacher effectiveness. The measurement for teacher effectiveness would have to be fair, transparent, timely, rigorous, and valid. A teacher would be assigned a rating of one through five for the teacher's overall performance. A greater number of separate ratings could be used to detail a teacher's performance under each appraisal criterion. The recommended process would have to provide a method for determining the effectiveness of teachers who did not teach a subject in which a state assessment was not administered.

The adopted process would have to require a significant portion of the appraisal to be based on the teacher's student learning objectives and outcomes, which would include student performance on state assessments. Student assessments could not be the primary indicator of teacher effectiveness.

The commissioner would have to solicit and consider the advice of teachers, administrative leaders, education experts, and parents. The

commissioner would have to develop, validate, and test proposals regarding the recommended process before the commissioner could adopt a recommended process. The commissioner could initiate pilot projects to implement and test proposals, which could address different aspects of the process.

As a part of the appraisal process, a teacher would have to complete a self-evaluation to be considered by the appraiser. Appraisers would have to be monitored as necessary to ensure fairness, thoroughness, and accuracy. The recommended appraisal process would have to guarantee that a conference between the teacher and the appraiser occurred as soon as possible after the appraisal was complete.

Appraisal frequency. A teacher would be appraised at least once each school year, and consistent and clear expectations would have to be communicated to the teacher at least once per school year. The recommended process could provide a modified and less frequent appraisal of a teacher if the most recent appraisal of the teacher rated the teacher at the highest level and did not identify any area of deficiency, but the teacher would have to be appraised at least once every three years.

Qualifications of an appraiser. The commissioner would have to adopt rules regarding the minimum qualifications necessary for a person who conducted a teacher appraisal. The rules would have to require the appraiser to be highly qualified to assess instructional quality and demonstrate instructional leadership.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2011. The commissioner would have to adopt a recommended appraisal process by September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSSB 4 would expand a current requirement by providing a voluntary tool to increase the effectiveness of appraisals. The bill would answer the call of teachers who would like increased accountability and oversight to capture data that could help teachers to increase the quality of the lessons taught to their students.

Most public and private employees enjoy the benefits of annual feedback about their job performance. This feedback allows the employees to adjust their actions to meet their goals. Teachers should be afforded the same feedback to promote growth and reward the teachers' best attributes. The teacher evaluation has been an underutilized tool that could promote

teacher professional growth and measure teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The bill would require multiple criteria, which is the best way to evaluate a teacher.

Two large school districts have intricate and successful teacher appraisals systems that have been successful in comparing teachers within their own school districts. Smaller and rural school districts are unable to benefit from similar systems due to the cost and the sizes of their districts. Many large school districts, due to budget constraints, cannot afford to maintain the programs. A statewide appraisal process would afford all school districts the ability to compare equally their students and teachers to those across the state.

The comprehensive exam requirement for early childhood education teachers would likely increase the quality and effectiveness of such teachers.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSSB 4 would seek to control the most locally controlled decision in the public school system — the hiring and evaluation of teachers by their employers. Teacher quality is not the strongest predictor of student success, so the state should focus its limited resources on other aspects of public education, such as class size and the length of the school year. The state should focus on a remedy to the loss of knowledge experienced by a student from a low socioeconomic background over the summer months rather than teacher appraisals. Low socioeconomic students learn as much as their wealthier counterparts during the school year, but do not retain this knowledge like their wealthier counterparts because they do not participate in educational activities and suffer disadvantages at home.

CSSB 4 would impose an unfunded mandate on school districts, doubling the number of appraisals conducted each year by a school district. The state should not increase the number of mandates on school districts when state funding is decreasing.

CSSB 4 would spend more money to burden teachers and school districts. Teachers do not require this or any other incentive to provide quality education in the classroom. Texas should not underestimate its teachers; they will continue to teach children despite decreased funding. The state does not need yet another accountability system to prove this.

Teachers do not want increased appraisals. Teachers have asked for useful data that can be used to interpret student's needs. The state collects copious data, but the data are not used to shape or change the classroom. The state should analyze its current data to produce meaningful conclusions for teachers and the state.

The requirement that a significant portion of the appraisal include student performance on state assessments would continue to encourage the high-stakes testing and intense pressure felt by public school students and teachers. An appraisal system based on state assessments is not supported by scientific research. Since the Texas Education Agency does not release state assessment scores until the following semester, the timeliness and relevance of a teacher appraisal based on student assessments would be diminished. More importantly, the state assessments used in Texas do not incorporate a student growth measure.

NOTES:

The House committee substitute differs from the Senate-passed version in numerous ways, including by deleting a provision that would have required individualized professional development plans for teachers.