

**SUBJECT:** Awarding principal performance incentives to the principal's school

**COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Sadler, Dutton, Culberson, Hernandez, Hochberg, Price, Rhodes, Uher  
0 nays  
1 absent — Williamson

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, February 4 — 30-0

**WITNESSES:** For — Eric Hartman, Texas Federation of Teachers; Patricia Hayes, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Mike McLamore, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Janet Patton, Secondary Principals Association; Marjorie Wall, Texas State Teachers Association  
  
Against — None

**BACKGROUND :** Under the Education Code, the commissioner of education is required to design an objective system to evaluate school principals. The commissioner may award cash performance incentives to principals identified through this system as high performing. The awards can be up to \$5,000 for a principal in the top quartile, or \$2,500 for a principal ranked in the second quartile.

**DIGEST:** CSSB 168 would give the education commissioner the option of designing an evaluation system for school principals and awarding principal performance incentives until August 31, 2001. Money awarded to principals under this program would have to be distributed to the principal's school and used in a manner determined by the campus advisory committee. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) would have to use any unexpended money appropriated for the principal performance program to fund successful school awards.  
  
CSSB 168 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership in each house.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSSB 168 would phase out an incentive program that is unpopular even among those it was intended to benefit. Teachers and administrators, including principals, are uncomfortable with a program that rewards the team leader individually for the success of the entire team. In response to these concerns, the education commissioner has held off in awarding any of the money authorized by current law.

A better way to reward principals, teachers, and students is the existing successful schools program, which allows the governor to present financial awards to outstanding schools that have shown exceptional achievement. This program recognizes achievement without singling out one person for a financial reward. It would be appropriate to phase out the principal performance incentives in favor of the successful school program.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

CSSB 168 would undermine a program to reward principals before it has even gotten off the ground by making it permissive and requiring that the incentive payment be awarded to the school rather than to the principal. Providing personal financial incentives for outstanding achievement works well in the private sector; there is no reason financial rewards for individuals should not be used in the public sector as well.

**NOTES:**

The Senate-passed version of SB 168 would have required the education commissioner to design an objective system to evaluate campuses rather than principals and would have allowed the commissioner to award performance incentives to campuses.

