

- SUBJECT:** Optional use by school districts of guidance counselor evaluation forms
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Grusendorf, Branch, Eissler, Griggs, Hochberg, Madden
0 nays
3 absent — Oliveira, Dawson, Dutton
- WITNESSES:** For — Marty DeLeon, Texas Association of School Boards, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators; Karen Soehnge, Texas Association of School Administrators

Against — Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association; (*Registered, did not testify:*) Carolyn Greer

On — (*Registered, did not testify:*) Dennis W. Engels
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 21.356 sets forth guidelines for the evaluation of school counselors. It requires the commissioner of education to develop and periodically update a job description and evaluation form for guidance counselors in consultation with state guidance counselor associations for use by school districts.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1169 would give school districts the option of whether or not to use the state-developed job description and evaluation form for school counselors.

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, 2003.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 1169 would return local control to school districts in the area of guidance counselor evaluations. The bill would show support for and trust in the judgment of local districts, giving them the flexibility to respond to local needs. Some districts perceive the state's provision of job descriptions and forms as going beyond a suggestion into a mandate. Although the

commissioner does develop a recommended appraisal process for teachers and administrators, in no other area of school employment are districts provided with state-developed job descriptions and evaluation forms — not for teachers, nurses, educational diagnosticians, or any other certified employee. CSHB 1169 would respect a school district’s discretion in counselor employment matters as it does in others.

CSHB 1169 would not discourage school districts from using the state-approved forms, but just would make it clear that school districts have a choice. The commissioner still would be required to consult with state guidance counselor associations in developing and modifying the job description and evaluation form. That process would be unaffected by the bill, and state forms still would be available at no charge to districts.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 1169 would erode consistency and quality in the evaluation process for school counselors. Discouraging school districts from using forms developed in concert with professional guidance counselors could lead to the use of forms that did not address the core skills and competencies required by counselors. School counselors must have a master’s degree and three years of classroom experience; administrators and board members might not have the specialized knowledge needed to create a fair evaluation. Just as content specialists should develop tests for students, content specialists also should develop evaluation tools for professionals.

**OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 1169 is redundant and unnecessary. School districts already have the option of not using state-developed job descriptions and evaluation forms for guidance counselors. State-developed job descriptions and evaluation forms are marked clearly with the word “optional,” so it is unclear how school districts could see this section of the code as a usurpation of local control.

NOTES:

The original version of HB 1169 would have deleted current law directing the commissioner of education to consult with state guidance counselor associations in the development and modification of the job description and evaluation form.