

SUBJECT: Restricting student assignments to inexperienced or uncertified teachers

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Eissler, Branch, Hochberg, Mowery, Olivo

2 nays — Zedler, Patrick

2 absent — Delisi, Dutton

WITNESSES: For — Ted Melina Raab, Texas Federation of Teachers

Against — Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; David Duty, Texas Association of School Boards; Ken McCraw, Texas Association of Community Schools

On — Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Alejandra Martin, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (*Registered, but did not testify:* Bob Popinski, Fast Growth School Coalition

DIGEST: HB 1432 would specify that, in a school district with more than 5,000 students, a student in kindergarten through sixth grade could not be assigned to a teacher who had less than one year of teaching experience or did not have the appropriate teacher certification.

For subjects on which students are assessed on the TAKS, students in grades seven through twelve could not be assigned to a teacher who had less than one year of teaching experience or did not have the appropriate teacher certification.

This requirement would not apply if the student's parent or guardian and a school counselor or administrator agreed that the assignment of a student to a teacher should be allowed.

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, 2007, and would apply beginning with the 2007-08 school year.

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

HB 1432 would require school administrators to pay more attention to students who need the most help by ensuring that careful consideration was given to each student's class assignment. Although school districts may have trouble attracting qualified teachers, every student should be able to have an experienced, certified teacher in most years.

The bill would apply only to the approximately 180 school districts with more than 5,000 students. These districts are large enough to accommodate the requirement that students be placed with certified teachers.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

It would be difficult for large school districts to ensure that every student was placed with a certified, experienced teacher, particularly at the junior high and high school levels. The state faces a shortage of certified teachers, and many are teaching outside their area of expertise. Schools and districts may find it difficult, if not impossible, to find enough certified teachers to meet the requirements of the bill.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

The bill should specify that students must be placed in classes with experienced, certified teachers only if the option were available.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 1922 by West, is pending in the Senate Education Committee.