

- SUBJECT:** Educator staff development for teaching students with disabilities
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Eissler, Zedler, Branch, Delisi, Dutton, Hochberg, Mowery, Olivo, Patrick
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Bill Carpenter, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Joan Altobelli, Texas Council for Administrators of Special Education; Ramiro Canales, Texas Association of School Administrators; David Duty, Texas Association of School Boards; Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Bob Glover, Abilene ISD; Elena Lincoln, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Alejandra Martin, Texas Association of Personnel Administrators; Rona Statman, The ARC of Texas)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Martin Peña, South Texas Association of Schools)
- On — Holly Eaton, Texas Classroom Teachers Association
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 21.451, requires staff development provided by a school district to be conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district and designed to improve education in the district. Staff development may include training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the district's student code of conduct. It also may include training that relates to the instruction of students with disabilities and is designed for educators who work primarily outside the area of special education.
- Under Education Code, sec. 29.005, a child enrolled in a special education program is required to have an individualized education program (IEP) established by parents, teachers, and other school staff.

DIGEST:

CSHB 3487 would add new provisions to Education Code, sec. 21.451, to apply to teachers of students for whom an IEP had been developed. Every three years, a teacher of students with IEPs would have to complete a minimum number of hours of staff development, as determined by commissioner rule, relating to the instruction of students with disabilities.

The training would have to include information relating to temperament and requirements of students with disabilities, methods for providing individualized instruction to and assessing students with disabilities, and behavioral management techniques.

The education commissioner would have to adopt rules that would include as a local option creating a three-year implementation schedule. At least one-third of teachers would have to participate during each year until all teachers had fulfilled the initial staff development requirement.

This requirement could be satisfied if a teacher participated in district-approved professional development activities or training other than staff development.

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 2008-09 school year.

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

CSHB 3487 would help ensure that all teachers have some professional development training in teaching students with special education needs, which could help minimize classroom disruption, enhance delivery of instruction and more successfully integrate students with special learning needs with their regular education peers.

Appropriately delivered education for students with disabilities would help decrease the need to assign students with special learning needs into disciplinary alternative education programs, self-contained settings, and remedial programs. Appropriate staff development also would help teachers, schools, and districts in addressing statewide gaps in achievement between successful and struggling students.

Even though the fiscal note indicates that the bill could cost \$26.3 million, there are many low and no-cost alternatives to the training costs that LBB

included in its estimate. It's unlikely that school districts would have to assume significant training costs to implement the bill.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 3487 would impose an unfunded mandate on school districts to provide additional staff training for teachers. If the state is going to impose this requirement, it should provide the funding necessary to implement it.

NOTES:

The bill's fiscal note indicates that the estimated cost to school districts of providing this training would be \$26.3 million statewide.