

- SUBJECT:** Creating the Texas Teacher Residency Program
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Branch, Patrick, Alonzo, Clardy, Darby, Howard, Martinez, Murphy, Raney
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jennifer Canaday, The Association of Texas Professional Educators; Ann Fickel, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Jeanne Gerlach, University of Texas at Arlington College of Education and Health Professions; Ted Melina Raab, Texas AFT (American Federation of Teachers); Nelson Salinas, Texas Association of Business; Amanda Thomas, Texas Charter Schools Association; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council)
- Against — None
- On — Priscilla Aquino-Garza, Educate Texas; David Gardner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1752 would create the Texas Teacher Residency Program at a public institution of higher education, which would partner with a school district or open-enrollment charter school to provide employment for teaching residents who were pursuing a master's degree and would offer conditional student loan repayments for participants. The commissioner of higher education would adopt rules as necessary to implement and administer the residency program.
- Eligibility.** To be eligible for the Texas Teacher Residency Program, an individual would:
- have received an initial teaching certificate not more than two years before applying for a residency slot and have less than 18 months of full-time equivalency teaching experience as a certified teacher;
 - hold a bachelor's degree and be a mid-career professional from outside of education with strong content knowledge or a record of achievement; or

- have a bachelor's degree and be a noncertified educator, such as a substitute teacher or teaching assistant.

Selection. The program would establish guidelines for selecting participants, which would include:

- a demonstration of comprehensive subject area knowledge or a record of accomplishment in the field or subject area to be taught;
- strong verbal and written communication skills; and
- attributes linked to effective teaching, as determined by interviews or performance assessments.

Establishment and design of program. The commissioner of higher education would establish the Texas Teacher Residency Program by March 1, 2014, at a public institution of higher education through a competitive selection process. The institution would have developed a commitment to investing in teacher education. The institution would partner with a school district or open-enrollment charter school that would provide employment to the program's participants.

The program would be designed to award teaching residents with a master's degree and lead to teacher certification for participants not already certified.

The bill would require that the higher education institution selected for the residency program identify faculty who could prepare teachers to impact student achievement in high-need schools, provide the faculty adequate time to teach courses and prepare teachers in the program, and value their efforts with rewards linked to the tenure process.

Program components. The residency program would have to include:

- competitive admission requirements with multiple criteria;
- integration of pedagogy and classroom practice;
- rigorous master's level course work required of participants while they served a participating school;
- a team mentorship approach to expose teaching residents to a variety of teaching methods, philosophies, and classroom environments;
- clear criteria for the selection of mentor teachers based on teacher effectiveness and the appropriate subject-area knowledge;
- measures of appropriate progress through the program;

- collaboration with regional education service centers or nonprofit education organizations to provide professional development or other structured learning experiences for teaching residents;
- a livable stipend for teaching residents;
- a post-completion commitment by teaching residents to serve four years at schools that were difficult to staff;
- job placement assistance for residents;
- mentorship, professional development, and networking opportunities for teaching residents up to one year after completion of the program;
- demonstration of the integral role and responsibilities of the partner school district or school in fulfilling the purpose of the program; and
- funds or donations provided by the participating higher education institution, area school district or open-enrollment charter school to demonstrate that the program could be sustained without state or grant funding.

Acceptance of certain funds. The commissioner of higher education could accept and solicit gifts, grants, and donations from public and private entities for the Texas Teacher Residency Program.

Student loan repayments. CSHB 1752 would stipulate that Teach for Texas student loan repayment assistance would be available to individuals who had completed the residency program, obtained teacher certification if they were not already certified, taught four years full-time in grades K-12 at a school experiencing a critical shortage of teachers or where at least 75 percent of the students are educationally disadvantaged.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 1752 would create a comprehensive master's level teacher preparation program to address a critical shortage of quality teachers in many of Texas' most underserved public schools. It would help struggling schools by launching a long-overdue apprenticeship program, encourage the pursuit of graduate education, and provide students who wanted to teach with the financial means and professional support to enter and stay in the classroom.

CSHB 1752 would foster a strong partnership between an institution of higher education and schools in the same community. The program would

prepare a new wave of educators with the best practices for teaching at schools that struggle to attract experienced or qualified teachers. The campuses targeted by the program often would be in urban areas or far-flung rural communities with economically disadvantaged students. The residency program would be modeled after programs in Boston, Memphis, and Chicago that have successfully steered teacher residents to practice in underserved areas.

Teacher retention is a key challenge in Texas, which lacks state programs to incentivize teacher retention in school districts that have the highest needs. CSHB 1752 would ensure that teaching residents received adequate professional development, networking opportunities, and other support tools to help reduce the exodus from the profession that particularly affects struggling schools. In the 2008-2009 school year, about 38 percent of Texas public school teachers had five or fewer years of teaching experience, according to data compiled by the Texas Education Agency.

The residency program would help challenge this trend. Teacher residents would be required to work for four years in underserved communities to be eligible for the student loan repayment program. This measure, which would use the Teach for Texas loan repayment program, would open doors to those who could not otherwise afford to pursue a graduate degree. Teachers who have used the Teach for Texas loan repayment program the past several years have reported an average student loan debt of \$32,000, according to state officials. The loan repayment would improve the economy by increasing the state's overall education level.

Although the Legislative Budget Board estimated the bill could result in a two-year cost of \$2.6 million, if funded by the Legislature, the rewards for cultivating teachers in critical areas far outweigh any short-term fiscal impact. One important provision of the bill is that it would require the participating higher education institution, area school district, or open-enrollment charter school to show it could sustain the program without financial help from state or grant funding.

While some question the value of such a program in improving student outcomes, the bill would help those with mastery of a subject area learn how to successfully convey information to students. It is designed to improve the quality of instruction, which would lead to improved student achievement.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 1752 is not necessary, nor would it be a responsible expenditure of state funds for a profession that already has an ample workforce. The bill would cost the state \$2.6 million in general revenue related funds in the 2014-15 biennium, according to the Legislative Budget Board. With no clear indication that these master's degrees lead to student improvement, CSHB 1752 would be an unnecessary shifting of money away from more pressing needs.

NOTES:

The committee substitute differs from the bill as introduced by:

- specifying that the participating higher education institution be a public institution;
- adding nonprofits and removing community experts from the list of collaborators that would provide professional development;
- specifying a minimum of four years as the commitment a teaching resident would have to make to serving at a school in need;
- adding a requirement for the participating higher education institution, partner school district, or open-enrollment charter school to demonstrate that the program could be sustained without state funds or grants;
- changing to 18 months from nine months the maximum teaching experience allowed for certain candidates; and
- stipulating that the higher education commissioner could solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations for the program.

According to the LBB's fiscal note, the bill is projected to cost about \$2.6 million in fiscal 2014-15 for personnel costs and training.