

SUBJECT: Pilot program for summer instruction for certain students in grades K-8

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Aycock, Allen, J. Davis, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Huberty, K. King, Ratliff, J. Rodriguez, Villarreal

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Jason Sabo, Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium; Grace Van Voorhis; Sandra West, Science Teachers Association of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Ellen Arnold, Texas Association of Goodwill Industries and Texas PTA; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Andrew Erben, Texas Institute for Education Reform; Monty Exter, The Association of Texas Professional Educators; John Fitzpatrick; Skylar Hurst; David Maddox, Kids First; Mike Morath; Anne Roussos, League of Women Voters of Texas; Nelson Salinas, Texas Association of Business; Chandra Villanueva, Center for Public Policy Priorities)

Against — Zenobia Joseph; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Brent Connett, Texas Conservative Coalition)

On — Susan Dawson, E3 Alliance; Michael Marder; Sandy McLemore; (*Registered, but did not testify:* David Anderson, Texas Education Agency; Laura Koenig, E3 Alliance)

DIGEST: HB 742 would require the state commissioner of education to create a pilot program that would provide competitive grants to up to 10 economically disadvantaged school districts for summer instruction to students in prekindergarten through grade 8. The bill would include compensation for teachers in the program and would require reporting and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the summer instruction. The commissioner of education would adopt rules as necessary to implement and administer the program beginning with the 2013-14 school year.

Eligibility and selection. To be eligible for the summer instruction grant program, more than half of a district's enrollment would have to be

educationally disadvantaged. Districts would be selected by the commissioner of education based on the most innovative ways they plan to achieve the following:

- encourage participation in the program by the most disadvantaged students;
- close the academic achievement gap;
- ensure that students in the program retain knowledge and skills from the school year;
- provide apprenticeship and mentorship for new teachers and student teachers; and
- add to the compensation of high-performing teachers by providing summer employment.

Grants. A district grant would be funded only with money appropriated for the program and any gifts, grants or donations made for the program. The education commissioner would determine the amount of each grant, which districts could use only for the summer program.

Reporting. A participating school district would be required to provide to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) an annual written report about the program, which would include its plan, details about the students in the program, test results for participants, and information on retention of participating teachers. TEA would submit the report by November 1 of each even-numbered year to the Legislature.

Evaluation: The bill would require TEA to hire a qualified third-party evaluator to measure the program's effectiveness and determine the cost in implementing statewide the best practices that improved student and teacher performance.

This 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, 2013.

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

HB 742 would help close the achievement gap that develops every summer between low-income students and their wealthier peers in prekindergarten through grade 8. It also would provide a district's best teachers with summer employment and a chance to mentor new and student teachers, helping retain them in the profession.

The results of the pilot program could become a model for improving student and teacher performance throughout the school year.

The bill would create a grant program to pay for summer instruction for up to 10 school districts with large numbers of students who were educationally disadvantaged. Selection of the participating districts would be competitive and hinge on their innovative ideas to tackle an alarming phenomenon that occurs each summer break.

Studies have shown that during the school year, students from different economic conditions progress at about the same rates. During the summer, however, economically disadvantaged students tend to regress while those who have more opportunities for enriching activities maintain their progress. This dynamic accounts for almost the entire school-age achievement gap that exists between the two cohorts.

The program would benefit students who were most in need of educational support and match them with the most effective teachers. Grant funding would provide summer compensation as a reward for educators who excelled in the classroom and taught in the program. The program would contain an apprenticeship component by having new teachers learn the best techniques and benefits of the profession from veteran educators.

The program's success would be measured thorough reporting by the participating districts and reviewed by a third-party evaluator. Data from the program could point the best way forward to improve student and teaching performance.

There is existing support for this type of program from foundations wanting to see new ideas unleashed in the classroom. Any costs of providing summer instruction could save the state money by helping students retain their knowledge over the summer, avoiding the time and expense of re-learning lessons in the fall.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 742 would create a program with unknown fiscal implications for the state, according to the Legislative Budget Board, because the bill does not specify a methodology for determining grant awards, and the number of districts that could qualify is too large to estimate the population that could potentially be served.

The bill could prompt future state appropriations if it became the standard

at all school districts and spread thin, already strained resources for Texas' public education system.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

HB 742 would rely too heavily on a pool of new teachers to educate students who are at-risk and would be better served by more seasoned professional educators.