

SUBJECT: Creating commission on new system for school testing, accountability

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Aycock, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Galindo, Huberty, K. King, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — González

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 30 — 31-0

WITNESSES: For — Barbara Frandsen, League of Women Voters of Texas; Kim Alexander, Roscoe Collegiate ISD; Jarrad Toussant, Texans for Education Reform; Andrew Benitez; Colin McDorman; (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Anderson, Arlington ISD Board of Trustees; Celina Moreno, MALDEF; Kim Cook, Texans Advocating for Meaningful Student Assessment; Cathy Dewitt, Texas Association of Business; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Marisha Negovetich, Texas Association of School Boards; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Lindsay Gustafson, Texas Classroom Teachers Organization; Janna Lilly, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Courtney Boswell, Texas Institute for Education Reform; Cameron Petty, Texas Institute for Education Reform; Colby Nichols, Texas Rural Education Association; Max Jones, The Greater Houston Partnership)

Against — Kris Sloan

On — Dineen Majcher, TAMSA; Ted Melina Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Wei-Ling Sun, Gregory Worthington, Angela Valenzuela, Texas Center for Education Policy; Zenobia Joseph; Steve Swanson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Theresa Trecino, Texans Advocating for Meaningful Student Assessment; Criss Cloudt, Texas Education Agency; Gloria Zyskowski, Texas Education Agency; Chris

Grammer, Texas School Alliance)

BACKGROUND: Education Code, ch. 39 establishes guidelines and procedures for academic assessment instruments and school district accountability, including performance indicators for student achievement.

Sec. 7.0561 establishes the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium, which provides information to the governor, Legislature, and commissioner of education on ways to improve student learning through innovative, next-generation learning standards, assessments, and accountability systems.

Reforms have been enacted in Texas in recent years with respect to assessments and accountability in the public schools. Some have expressed a belief that these changes have resulted in conflicting standards, confusing changes, and inconsistent or misaligned policies, negatively affecting student learning and school progress.

DIGEST: SB 1200 would establish the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability. The commission would be tasked with developing and making recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public school accountability.

Commission composition. The commission would be composed of 15 members. It would include members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House representing parents, educators in the public school system and in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium, members of the business and civic community, and leaders in research concerning student assessment and outcomes. The commission also would include public and higher education committee chairs from the House of Representatives and Senate or their designated representatives, as well as a member of the State Board of Education as designated by the board's chair.

The governor would designate a presiding officer of the commission. Members of the commission would not be entitled to compensation but

could receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in performing commission duties. Administrative support for the commission would be provided by Texas Education Agency staff and supported through an appropriation to the Texas Education Agency.

Commission recommendations and reporting. The commission would be required to develop recommendations for state accountability and student assessment systems. These recommendations also would address opportunities to assess students to yield certain information and outcomes, including:

- providing actionable information to parents, guardians, educators, and the public;
- supporting learning activities;
- measuring student educational growth toward mastery; and
- valuing critical thinking.

Recommendations also would have to be developed with the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to address alignment of state performance standards with college and career readiness requirements. In addition, the commission would have to identify policy changes enabling students to advance through subject matter and grade levels based on demonstrated mastery. The recommendations would identify policies needed to create student assessment and school accountability systems that met state standards while possessing certain qualities such as being community-based and reflecting the unique needs of each community.

The commission would be required to submit a report to the governor and Legislature by September 1, 2016, recommending statutory changes to improve student assessment and school accountability systems. The recommendations on innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessments recommended by the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium would have to be considered in preparing the report.

Expiration of commission. The commission would be abolished and the

chapter establishing it would expire January 1, 2017.

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, 2015.