

SUBJECT: Revising public school accountability, delaying A-F ratings

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Jr., Gooden,
K. King, Koop, Meyer, VanDeaver

0 nays

WITNESSES: *(at March 21 hearing)*

For — Sara Ptomey, Aldine, Urban Curriculum Council; Mary Starling, Alief ISD; Drew Scheberle, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Michael Hinojosa, Dallas ISD, Texas Urban Council, Texas Association of School Administrators; Pauline Dow, North East Independent School District; Brian Binggeli, Plano ISD; Dr. Robert Bostic, Stafford Municipal School District; Theresa Trevino, TAMSA; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Mary Ann Whiteker, Texas Association of School Administrators; Doug Williams, Texas Association of School Administrators and Sunnyvale ISD; Holly Eaton, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Robert Floyd, Texas Music Educators Association and Texas Coalition for Arts Education; Sheri Doss, Texas PTA; HD Chambers, Texas School Alliance; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Monty Exter, The Association of Texas Professional Educators; Laura Yeager; *(Registered, but did not testify: Julie Cowan, AISD board of trustees; Audrey Young, Apple Springs ISD President, Board of Trustees; Cindy Anderson and Amber Elenz, Austin ISD; Robert McLain, Channing ISD; Mike Meroney, Huntsman Corporation, BASF Corporation, Texas Workorce Coalition; William Chapman and James Garrett, Jarrell ISD; Grace Chimene, League of Women Voters of Texas; Gary Bingham, Mesquite ISD School Board; Deborah Caldwell, North East Independent School District; Liz Morse, Richardson ISD; Priscilla Camacho, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; Todd Webster, Spring Branch ISD; Jesse Romero, Texas Association for Bilingual Education; Stephanie Simpson, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Grover Campbell, Texas Association of School Boards; Vernagene Mott, Texas Association of School Boards; Veronica Garcia, Texas Charter Schools*

Association; Robert Flores, Texas Citizens Action Network; Michael White, Texas Construction Association; Janna Lilly, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Colby Nichols, Texas Rural Education Association; Tami Keeling, Victoria ISD, TASB; and seven individuals)

Against — None

On — Randy Willis, Granger ISD, Texas Rural Education Association; Ann Smisko, Raise Your Hand Texas; Mike Morath and Shannon Housson, Texas Education Agency; Ted Melina Raab, Texas AFT (American Federation of Teachers); Courtney Boswell, Texas Aspires; Miranda Goodsheller, Texas Association of Business; Chloe Sikes, Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC); Steve Swanson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Anderson, Arlington ISD Board of Trustees; Kara Belew and Von Byer, Texas Education Agency; Kim Cook and Heather Sheffield, Texans Advocating for Meaningful Student Assessment)

(at April 4 hearing)

For — HD Chambers, Texas School Alliance, Alief ISD

Against — None

On — Mike Morath, Texas Education Agency

BACKGROUND: The 84th Legislature in 2015 enacted HB 2804 by Aycock, which adopted a new system for evaluating school districts and campuses and required campuses to be assigned a performance rating corresponding to the letters A-F beginning in the 2017-18 school year.

DIGEST: CSHB 22 would revise the public school accountability system to restructure and reduce the domains of achievement indicators on which districts and campuses are evaluated. The bill would limit the use of student performance on state exams in the rating system and would delay the implementation of A-F letter ratings until the 2019-2020 school year.

Letter ratings. For the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years, instead of using A-F letter ratings, the Commissioner of Education would be required to evaluate district and campus performance and assign ratings using the 2016 Accountability Manual, which rates schools as met standard or improvement required. The commissioner could by rule adopt revisions to the manual for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years for necessary date and deadlines and federal law changes.

The bill would remove requirements to assign districts and campuses an overall rating of A, B, C, D, or F but would retain requirements for those letter grades to be assigned to each of the three domains. A domain rating of D would be changed from a reflection of unacceptable performance to a reflection of performance in need of improvement.

The commissioner would be required to prepare reports using data from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years on how districts and campuses would have been rated under the A-F system.

Domains. The bill would reduce from five to three the number of domains for evaluating district and campus performance. The commissioner could use indicators based on data that was disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status to the extent feasible, rather than being required to use them.

The commissioner would be authorized to adjust a domain performance rating for a domain disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or another factor by increasing the rating one level.

The commissioner would have to determine a method to exclude newly enrolled students from a district or campus performance rating. A newly enrolled student would be defined as a student who transferred to a Texas school from another state or country and who had not been previously enrolled in a Texas school. The commissioner also would be required to determine a method of attributing greater weight for each school year a student has been continuously enrolled in the district or campus.

The bill would limit student performance on state exams to 50 percent of the ratings in the student achievement and student progress domains.

Student achievement domain. The student achievement domain would include results from state standardized exams and locally selected assessments under performance standards determined by the education commissioner or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The bill would require the adoption of achievement indicators for high school students who:

- completed courses in fine arts, physical education, or a language other than English or other courses included in the state's enrichment curriculum and participate in extracurricular activities, including University Interscholastic League activities such as academic, fine arts, and athletic events and foreign language, chess, and robotics clubs;
- completed a dual credit course that satisfies a requirement under the foundation high school program;
- enlisted in the armed forces;
- completed a coherent sequence of courses that lead to a qualifying industry certification as determined by the commissioner;
- were admitted into a postsecondary industry certification program that requires successful high school performance;
- were prepared to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in entry-level college courses.

The bill also would require indicators that computed graduation rates and students who attained the distinguished level of achievement or completed an associate degree while enrolled in high school.

At the middle and junior high school level, an indicator would account for students who dropped out of school the preceding school year and did not return during the current school year by a date determined by the commissioner.

School progress domain. The school progress domain would include indicators for effectiveness in promoting student learning and would compare districts and campuses to those with similar demographic characteristics.

The commissioner would be required to evaluate districts and campuses using indicators that account for annual improvement on assessments. It would require the indicator accounting for limited English proficiency students who successfully exit a bilingual education or special language program to comply with rules established by the commissioner regarding the development of proficiency in more than one language.

Other indicators of school progress would include:

- students in grades 1 through 8 who successfully completed curriculum requirements for promotion to the next grade;
- students enrolled in grade 9 for the first time who earned the credits required for promotion to the next grade; and
- students who complete varied, rigorous, and relevant curricular options that would lead to postsecondary success, including advanced placement or similar courses; and
- students in grades 6 through 12 who took an advanced placement test, international baccalaureate exam, or college entrance or preliminary college exam.

In this domain, the commissioner would develop an indicator for evaluating relative performance in listed categories among districts and campuses with similar characteristics, including student socioeconomic status, enrollment size, surrounding community attributes, district property wealth per student in weighted average daily attendance, and access to programs and opportunities that promote college and career readiness.

School climate domain. The bill would require at least 50 percent of the school climate domain be based on three programs or categories of performance related to community and student engagement that are

locally selected and evaluated. This domain also would include results from a local evaluation of school climate of districts and campuses obtained through a uniform method of data collection adopted by commissioner rule.

The commissioner would be authorized to incorporate a school climate survey as an indicator for the school climate domain. Such a survey would be administered to district administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Not later than the 2021-22 school year, the commissioner would be required to determine whether the school climate survey would be incorporated by implementing its use of survey information in the 2018-19 school year and requiring the reporting of such survey information in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.

The commissioner could contract with a third party for services related to the survey.

Other school climate indicators would include:

- high school students who completed at least one endorsement;
- high school students who completed a coherent sequence of career and technical courses or a coherent sequence of fine arts courses;
- educationally disadvantaged students who completed a postsecondary readiness course;
- teacher quality as determined by the commissioner, provided that any teacher quality indicator would limit the weight of student performance on assessments to no more than 25 percent; and
- health and wellness as determined by the commissioner.

For campuses that serve students enrolled in prekindergarten, an indicator would be included to account for student participation in full-day prekindergarten. For campuses that serve students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 5, an indicator would be included to account for student participation in literacy and math academies.

The commissioner would be authorized to increase the rating of any

domain up to one level, but not more than one time. The commissioner would be required to review performance indicators periodically instead of biennially. In adopting rules to implement the bill, the commissioner would be required to solicit statewide input from persons who would likely be affected, including school boards, administrators, teachers, and parents.

Dropout rates. The bill would add to the list of exclusions for the computation of certain dropout and completion rates students whose initial enrollment in a Texas school occurred in grades 11 or 12.

Other provisions. The commissioner would be required by September 30 of each year or soon after to define the state standard and indicators for use that school year. In consultation with educators, parents, and business and industry representatives, as necessary, the commissioner would be required to establish and modify standards to achieve the goals of eliminating achievement gaps based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and ensure Texas is a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success.

The bill would prohibit the commissioner from requiring participation in certain activities as part of a modified campus turnaround plan that did not directly relate to a concern identified in the written rejection of the original plan.

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, 2017.

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

CSHB 22 would make needed improvements to the public school accountability system to reduce the influence of test scores by adding other metrics of student achievement and measuring growth along with content mastery. It would take steps to address socioeconomic disparities between districts by comparing student growth among similarly situated districts and campuses. It would delay the implementation of A-F letter

ratings for two school years and eliminate an overall letter grade for districts and campuses.

A-F ratings. The delay in issuing A-F labels would allow additional time to model the letter-grade system so that any required adjustments could be made before the ratings are assigned. It also would give schools and parents a chance to understand and prepare for the letter ratings. The bill would remove an overall letter grade for a school or district, instead assigning letter grades to each of three domains. One letter grade cannot give the full picture of something as complex as educating students who come from different backgrounds and with different challenges.

The commissioner's recent report on how schools would have fared under A-F were not reflective of the quality work performed by Texas educators and exposed some major flaws in the rating system. For example, some schools received a lower grade due to conditions beyond their control, such as student absences or the lack of parental engagement due to parents' work schedules.

Domains. The bill would limit STAAR test scores to 50 percent of the overall score in the student achievement and student progress domains. The inclusion of multiple indicators in each domain would give a broad view of student performance instead of the current system's heavy focus on test scores. It would treat schools more fairly by giving greater weight to the performance of students who had been continuously enrolled in the district.

The commissioner would still be required to disaggregate most data by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status to ensure that schools were held accountable for all students. The bill would give permission for the commissioner to make a one-time upward rating adjustment to allow for a special circumstance such as an influx of students due to a natural disaster.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 22 would create yet another set of revisions to an accountability system that is already overly complex and burdensome. The ratings and

the underlying components need to be stabilized so schools can move forward knowing how they will be held accountable by the state.

A-F ratings. CSHB 22 would delay the implementation of a clear and understandable system of rating schools by letter grade. These ratings should be implemented beginning with the 2017-18 school year as planned, and the requirement for a summative grade for each school and district should be retained to allow parents a simple, straightforward way to see how their children's schools are performing. The Legislature is not even giving the letter grade system time to work before making major changes.

Domains. The large number of indicators in the student achievement domain would make the system substantially more complex and could make it difficult for a district or campus to understand what needs improvement. Rural schools that lack resources to provide opportunities such as dual credit courses and industry certifications would be at a disadvantage on these measurements.

The bill should not weaken requirements to include disaggregated data in the accountability system. Schools should be held accountable for student achievement by sub-groups, such as race, socioeconomic status, and students classified as English learners and special education, to ensure that no students fall through cracks in the education system.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

The Legislature should do away completely with the punitive A-F letter grades instead of merely delaying the rating system for two school years. Letter grades miscommunicate the quality of school performance and tend to punish schools serving educationally disadvantaged students and the communities where those schools are located. In addition, a letter rating system risks potential negative impacts on economic development and the Texas public education system.

The bill should be amended to ensure that struggling campuses and districts receive adequate resources from the state to ensure that all children have access to quality learning opportunities.

NOTES: According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, CSHB 22 would have a negative impact of \$4.5 million for fiscal 2018-19. Modifying the performance indicators and standards under the state accountability system would result in a cost of \$2.4 million in fiscal 2018 and \$2.1 million in fiscal 2019 for initial development costs. Costs would be \$1.7 million per year in subsequent years.