

SUBJECT: Removing TEA monitoring requirements for schools with certain ratings

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

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

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Michael Hinojosa, Dallas ISD, Texas Urban Council (*Registered, but did not testify*; Audrey Young, Apple Springs ISD Board of Trustees; Julie Linn, District Charter Alliance; Seth Rau, San Antonio ISD; Ted Melina Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Courtney Boswell and Molly Weiner, Texas Aspires Foundation; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Grover Campbell, Texas Association of School Boards; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Janna Lilly, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Tami Keeling, Victoria ISD, Texas Association of School Boards)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ellen Arnold, Texas PTA)

On — Von Byer, Texas Education Agency (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kara Belew, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 39.106 requires a public school that receives an unacceptable rating under the school accountability system to be assigned a campus intervention team to help the Texas Education Agency monitor the school and help the school reach an acceptable rating. For each year the campus earns an unacceptable performance rating, the intervention team must continue to work with the school until it has maintained satisfactory performance for two consecutive years or for one year if the Commissioner of Education determines the school is operating in a manner that improves student achievement.

DIGEST: HB 2263 would remove the provision requiring that a campus intervention team continue to work with a school rated academically unacceptable until it had maintained satisfactory performance for two consecutive years or for one year if the Commissioner of Education determined the school was operating in a manner that improves student achievement.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 2263 would enable the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to better focus its time and resources on truly struggling schools by no longer requiring extended monitoring of schools that may have improved after being rated academically unacceptable. Currently, TEA is devoting time and resources to about 450 schools that no longer have unacceptable ratings because they have made sufficient improvements. This bill would enable the agency to better focus its time and resources on the approximately 600 schools that still have unacceptable ratings.

Continual monitoring for two years by TEA through a campus intervention team can be costly for school districts. In addition to burdensome paperwork and administrative costs associated with a campus intervention team, paying a professional service provider, who is an experienced former school or district administrator, to support the school in its intervention requirements and report progress to TEA can cost \$75 or more per hour. Eliminating this continual monitoring requirement could save Texas school districts millions of dollars.

School districts already are motivated to avoid returning to an unacceptable rating due to the associated strict sanctions. Monitoring the campus after it is no longer rated unacceptable serves no real purpose and only wastes the time and resources of the school and the agency.

It can be confusing to parents, teachers, and staff when a school that has earned an unacceptable rating continues to be monitored by TEA even after making necessary improvements. Removing the continued monitoring requirement could bring clarity to communities about whether

their schools have received an acceptable or unacceptable rating.

Schools that believe they need additional monitoring to avoid fluctuating in and out of acceptable rating status could continue to work with a campus intervention team if they wished. By removing the requirement for continued monitoring, TEA would have more time and resources to devote to fluctuating schools, improving the likelihood of these schools achieving long-term success.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

Many schools fluctuate between acceptable and unacceptable ratings, and HB 2263 would eliminate TEA's mechanism for making sure that the progress of these schools was being properly monitored, even if the schools had been rated acceptable for a certain period. The one or two years of continued monitoring by TEA required under current law is needed to ensure that schools make real structural changes, rather than short-lived improvements.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, HB 2263 would reduce costs to school districts containing campuses that no longer would be required to contract with a professional service provider after the campus attained an acceptable rating.

Two companion bills, SB 1783 by West and SB 1902 by West, were referred to the Senate Education Committee on March 23.