

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R894 BDH-D

S.B. 1276
By: Armbrister
Education
3/29/2001
As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Current state law requires the administration of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test to certain students enrolled in public schools as a tool for gauging their attainment of basic academic skills. For many students, this is not an accurate indicator of their abilities. There are those who believe that the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) provides a better evaluation of older students' skill levels and should be administered in place of the TAAS test to better prepare high school juniors and seniors for post-secondary higher education.

As proposed, S.B. 1276 allows up to five school districts, as part of a pilot program administered by the commissioner of higher education, to administer the TASP test mandatorily to juniors and seniors in high school. The bill provides that state and local funds will finance the costs associated with the administration of the test in designated districts, and it provides that the tests will be administered during regularly scheduled school days.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 28B, Education Code, by adding Section 28.027, as follows:

Sec. 28.027. TEXAS ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAM TEST; PILOT PROJECT.

(a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner), in cooperation with the commissioner of higher education, to implement a pilot project under which the Texas Academic Skills Program Test adopted under Section 51.306 is administered to each student enrolled at the 11th or 12th grade level at no cost to the student.

(b) Requires the commissioner to select not more than five school districts to participate in the project based on applications submitted by the districts. Prohibits the commissioner from requiring a district to participate in the project.

(c) Authorizes a school district participating in the project, notwithstanding any other provision of this code, to require each student enrolled in the school district at the 11th or 12th grade level to take the Texas Academic Skills Program Test, use state and local funds to pay any costs associated with administering the test, and administer the test during a regular school day.

(d) Provides that this section expires August 31, 2011.

SECTION 2. Requires the commissioner of education to implement the pilot project required by Section 28.027, Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2001-2002 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2001.