

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 570
By: Shapiro
Education
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Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, Section 21.458, Education Code, authorizes school districts to assign mentor teachers to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject matter or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. This bill redesigns that currently underutilized program by providing a district-level structure to enhance the program's usefulness to schools while enabling districts to be innovative in designing a program tailored to their specific needs. It also provides standards for what induction programs should include. Furthermore, this bill brings cohesion to current policies regarding certification, appraisal, and accountability in a way that best serves our states' newest teachers.

This bill creates a comprehensive support structure which fosters collaboration among the important partners invested in supporting each and every beginning teacher. In addition, this bill implements research-based standards defining the necessary components of high-quality induction.

C.S.S.B. 570 amends current law relating to beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs for public schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Sections 21.652 and 21.656, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the commissioner of education is rescinded in SECTION 2 (Section 21.458, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Subchapter N, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER N. BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

Sec. 21.651. DEFINITIONS. Defines in this subchapter, "beginning teacher" and "program."

Sec. 21.652. BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAM.
(a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) by rule, in order to enable establishment of sustainable district-wide high-quality beginning teacher induction and mentoring, to establish a beginning teacher induction and mentoring program (program) under which school districts may participate, in accordance with local plans approved by the commissioner that are based on guidelines adopted under this subchapter. Provides that a participating district receives program grants from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) from funds appropriated to TEA for the purpose of planning for and providing high-quality induction and mentoring to beginning teachers in the manner provided by this subchapter. Provides that a district is not required to participate in the program, but each district is authorized to ensure that beginning teachers have access to high-quality induction and mentoring consistent with the guidelines established under Section 21.653(a).

(b) Requires the commissioner, in consultation with the committee established under Subsection (c), in establishing the program, to adopt program guidelines in accordance with Section 21.653(a), not later than January 1, 2012. Requires the commissioner to adopt program guidelines in accordance with Section 21.653(b) for a school district to follow in developing a local plan, not later than January 1, 2012.

(c) Requires the commissioner to appoint a committee of interested persons, including TEA staff, education policy makers, representatives of educator preparation programs and educator associations, and educators who work with beginning teachers under beginning teacher induction programs, as determined appropriate by the commissioner, to assist the commissioner in developing program guidelines under Section 21.653(a).

(d) Requires the commissioner, in adopting rules under this section, to provide for participating school districts to receive technical assistance and planning and program guidance.

Sec. 21.653. PROGRAM GUIDELINES. (a) Requires that the program guidelines establish quality indicators for each of the following required components of the program:

(1) research-based program standards, including:

(A) assigning a district-level coordinator to administer the program at the district level;

(B) establishing a local advisory committee of teachers and other educators to assist in implementing the program in the school district;

(C) establishing district administrative policy roles and responsibilities for persons involved in the program;

(D) establishing, for each beginning teacher in the program, a support team composed of:

(i) the campus principal or the beginning teacher's appraiser;

(ii) an educator preparation program field supervisor; and

(iii) the beginning teacher's mentor provided by the district;

(E) requiring each beginning teacher and that teacher's support team members described by Paragraph (D) to meet at least three times each school year; and

(F) providing training for support team members described by Paragraph (D);

(2) mentoring standards to ensure high-quality mentoring, including:

(A) requiring each district to assign a mentor teacher to each beginning teacher;

(B) requiring each teacher who is assigned as a mentor to:

(i) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance;

(ii) teach the same subject or grade level, as applicable, as the beginning teacher the mentor teacher is mentoring;

(iii) teach in the same school as the beginning teacher the mentor teacher is mentoring, to the extent practicable; and

(iv) complete a research-based mentoring and induction training program approved by the commissioner and provided by the district;

(C) providing for release time from classroom instruction duties for the mentor teacher, as applicable, and the beginning teacher the mentor teacher is mentoring in order to meet, conduct observations, and engage in other activities focused on enhancing the student achievement of the beginning teacher's students;

(D) providing, to the extent practicable, for common planning time for the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher the mentor teacher is mentoring;

(E) limiting the assignment to two beginning teachers for each mentor teacher who is a classroom teacher; and

(F) providing for stipends for mentor teachers;

(3) performance standards aligned with the criteria for the recommended appraisal process adopted by the commissioner under Section 21.351 (Recommended Appraisal Process and Performance Criteria);

(4) ongoing professional development requirements, including required training for:

(A) participating program administrators regarding successful implementation and administration of the program; and

(B) participating school administrators, mentor teachers, and beginning teachers;

(5) standards-based formative assessments; and

(6) provisions for partnership and collaboration, including consistent and regular collaboration between participating districts and appropriate educator preparation programs.

(b) Requires the commissioner to adopt guidelines for funding the program, including requiring a participating school district to provide matching funds in an amount determined by the commissioner.

Sec. 21.654. LOCAL PLANS. (a) Requires a district-level committee for a school district that intends to participate in the program, such as the district-level planning and decision-making committee established under Subchapter F (District-Level and Site-Based Decision-Making), Chapter 11 (School Districts), to, beginning January 1, 2012, develop a local beginning teacher induction and mentoring plan for the district. Authorizes the local plan to provide for participation in the program by all campuses in the district or only those campuses selected by the district-level committee. Requires that

a local plan that does not provide for participation in the program by all campuses in the district include an analysis and timeline for future district-wide implementation.

(b) Requires a majority of classroom teachers assigned to a campus that is proposed for selection to participate in the program to approve participation to be included in the local plan.

(c) Requires a school district to submit a local plan to TEA for approval. Requires that the plan be submitted together with evidence of significant teacher involvement in the development of the plan.

(d) Authorizes TEA to approve only a local plan that meets program guidelines adopted under Section 21.653.

(e) Authorizes TEA to approve a local plan for implementation beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.

Sec. 21.6541. PROGRAM EVALUATION. (a) Requires the commissioner to:

(1) provide for the periodic evaluation of the program during the school year by surveying program participants and by any other means determined by the commissioner; and

(2) not later than December 1, 2014, prepare and deliver to each member of the legislature a report describing the results of the program conducted under this subchapter, including the results of the evaluations conducted in accordance with Subdivision (1).

(b) Provides that this section expires January 1, 2015.

Sec. 21.655. COMPONENTS OF BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAM. Authorizes any program adopted by a district to include the following components:

(1) research-based program standards;

(2) mentoring standards to ensure high-quality mentoring;

(3) performance standards aligned with the criteria for the recommended appraisal process adopted by the commissioner under Section 21.351;

(4) ongoing professional development requirements;

(5) standards-based formative assessments; and

(6) provisions for partnership and collaboration, including consistent and regular collaboration between the district and educator preparation programs.

Sec. 21.656. RULES. Requires the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to administer this subchapter.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 21.458 (Mentors), Education Code.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.