

AN ACT

relating to requiring the Texas Education Agency to conduct a study to develop a writing assessment method for public school students and establish a pilot program to administer the assessment method developed.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 39, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 39.02301 to read as follows:

Sec. 39.02301. WRITING ASSESSMENT STUDY; PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) During the 2015-2016 school year, the agency, in coordination with the entity that has been contracted to develop or implement assessment instruments under Section 39.023, shall conduct a study to develop a writing assessment method as an alternative to the writing assessment instruments required under Sections 39.023(a) and (c). The writing assessment method must be designed to assess:

(1) a student's mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in writing through timed writing samples;

(2) improvement of a student's writing skills from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year;

(3) a student's ability to follow the writing process from rough draft to final product; and

(4) a student's ability to produce more than one type of writing style.

(b) During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, the

1 agency shall establish a pilot program as provided by this section
2 to implement in designated school districts the writing assessment
3 method developed under Subsection (a).

4 (c) The agency shall designate school districts to
5 participate in the pilot program as provided by this subsection.
6 The pilot program must include at least one large urban district,
7 one medium-sized district, and one rural district. Each district
8 included must have a student enrollment that is representative of
9 diverse demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds. To the extent
10 practicable, the agency shall designate the number of districts the
11 agency determines appropriate to achieve the cost savings described
12 by Subsection (d).

13 (d) A school district designated to participate in the pilot
14 program under this section is not required to comply with the
15 writing assessment requirements under Sections 39.023(a) and (c)
16 during the period the district is participating in the pilot
17 program. The agency shall, to the greatest extent practicable,
18 apply cost savings that result from the exemption under this
19 subsection to offset the costs accrued under this section.

20 (e) The agency shall establish the process for
21 consolidating student writing assessments under the method
22 developed under Subsection (a) to be submitted for scoring. This
23 process may include the submission of a student portfolio for
24 scoring.

25 (f) The individuals responsible for scoring student writing
26 assessments under the pilot program shall be coordinated jointly
27 by:

1 (1) the school district in which the student is
2 enrolled and that is participating in the pilot program;

3 (2) a public junior college or institution of higher
4 education that enters into an agreement with the participating
5 school district; and

6 (3) the regional education service center that serves
7 the participating district.

8 (g) A random sampling of scored student writing
9 assessments, the size of which the agency shall determine, shall be
10 delivered to the agency.

11 (h) Not later than September 1, 2016, the agency shall
12 prepare and deliver to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the
13 speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officer
14 of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction
15 over primary and secondary education a report covering the study of
16 the development of the writing assessment method under Subsection
17 (a). Not later than September 1 of each year in 2017 and 2018, the
18 agency shall prepare and deliver to the governor, the lieutenant
19 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the
20 presiding officer of each legislative standing committee with
21 primary jurisdiction over primary and secondary education a report
22 that:

23 (1) evaluates the implementation and progress of the
24 pilot program under this section; and

25 (2) makes recommendations regarding the continuation
26 or expansion of the pilot program.

27 (i) The agency shall adopt rules as necessary to administer

1 this section.

2 (j) This section expires September 1, 2019.

3 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
4 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
5 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
6 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
7 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1164 was passed by the House on April 30, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 1164 on May 27, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 92, Nays 45, 4 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1164 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 25, 2015, by the following vote: Yeas 25, Nays 6.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor