

Texas Institute for Education Reform

Policy Goals and Bills Filed by the 80th Texas Legislature

Goal I: Reading

1. S.B. 1697 by Shapiro

Purpose: Improve reading proficiency of students in grades 6 through 8.

Key Provisions:

- Establishes reading academies for teachers who provide instruction for students in grades 6 through 8 to train teachers in (a) reading instruction, (b) administration of reading assessments, (c) interpretation of reading assessment results, and (d) strategies for incorporating reading instruction into curriculum for all subject areas;
- Directs the commissioner to require middle/junior high school teachers to attend a reading academy if the school is rated academically unacceptable on the basis of reading performance;
- Directs the commissioner to conduct or contract for evaluation of the reading academies;
- Requires schools to administer a reading assessment at the beginning of the seventh grade to students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on state assessments in grade six, and to provide additional reading instruction and intervention to seventh grade students who did not demonstrate proficiency in grade six; and
- Allows the commissioner to adopt rules requiring districts to underwrite costs of accelerated reading instruction with Title I federal funds.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Extend reading training to teachers in kindergarten through grade 5 who did not attend previous reading academies;
- Require all educator preparation programs for elementary and middle school teachers to include - (a) essential components of reading instruction, (b) spelling, (c) vocabulary, (d) grammar, punctuation, and capitalization, (e) diagnosis of reading deficiencies, (f) strategies for early intervention with reading deficiencies, (g) scientifically-based reading research on the way children learn to read and the manner in which proficient readers read, (h) structure of the English language, (i) relationships between reading, writing, and spelling, and (j) planning and delivering reading of high quality books and the relationship of reading to improved performance;
- Require certification tests to cover these areas listed above, and to require prospective elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and all reading teachers to pass the reading section of the certification test;
- Revise educator standards and certification, as well as teacher editions of reading textbooks, to reflect the above listed areas;

- Incorporate definitions and requirements for reading in the No Child Left Behind Act in all state policy pertaining to reading, including the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills;
- Fund and administer a national norm-referenced reading assessment to all first grade students;
- Establish standards for reading proficiency on early reading diagnosis assessments, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and state assessments that are - (a) grade-level specific, (b) increase in depth and complexity from one grade to the next, and (c) are comparable to or higher than standards for reading proficiency set by the National Assessment of Educational Progress; and
- Establish standards for textbook adoption that require reading textbooks for grades one through eight to include the following to qualify as conforming - (a) phonemic awareness, (b) systematic, explicit, and direct phonics instruction, (c) decodable text, and (d) spelling and vocabulary instruction.

2. H.B. 57 by Isett

Purpose: Introduce a reading and language intervention pilot program.

Key Provisions:

- Directs the commissioner to establish a pilot program for intensive reading and language intervention for the school years 2007-08 and 2008-09, and allows campuses to participate in the pilot program if campuses have failed to improve reading performance;
- Directs the commissioner to adopt criteria for the program that include neuroscience-based, scientifically validated methods, interventions or instructional tools that have proven to accelerate learning, cognitive ability and language proficiency, and to approve program vendors; and
- Requires program vendors to evaluate and report student performance.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Direct the commissioner to adopt rules requiring districts to underwrite costs associated with the pilot program with Title I and any other applicable federal funds;
- Establish school eligibility for participating in the pilot based on failure to achieve an acceptable rating in reading;
- Require that approved pilot programs meet federal requirements established by the No Child Left Behind Act and other applicable federal programs; and
- Direct the commissioner to conduct or commission an evaluation of the pilot programs (instead of a report by the vendors).

3. H.B. 1270 by Eissler

Purpose: Introduce a reading and language intervention pilot program.

Key Provisions:

- Same as H.B. 57 above, absent the term “if the commissioner establishes the pilot.”

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Same as H.B. 57 above.

4. H.B. 1544 by Howard

Purpose: Improve educator preparation and certification requirements concerning reading instruction.

Key Provisions:

- Requires certification to be based on training in - (a) essential components of reading instruction, (b) reading, (c) spelling, (d) grammar, punctuation, and capitalization skills, (e) diagnosis of reading deficiencies, (f) strategies for early intervention in reading deficiencies, (g) scientifically-based reading research on the manner in which children learn to read and proficient readers read, (h) structure of the English language, (i) relationships between reading, writing, and spelling, (j) planning and delivering appropriate reading instruction based on assessment and evaluation, and (k) independent reading of high quality books and the relationship of that reading to improved reading performance;
- Requires all educator preparation programs to require prospective teachers for elementary grades or to teach reading at any grade to complete training in all of the above areas;
- Requires examinations for certification must include all of the above areas listed in this bill;
- Requires staff development for teachers who teach reading at all levels and special education to complete at least five days of training in areas listed in this bill; and
- Defines terms related to reading according to meanings assigned by No Child Left Behind Act.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Add vocabulary instruction to the list of elements required for educator preparation and certification;
- Require staff development for teachers who teach reading at all levels and special education to annually complete at least five days of training that is based on scientific- or evidence-based instruction in the areas listed in this bill; and
- Require prospective elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and all reading teachers to pass the reading section of the state certification test.

5. H.B. 1665 by Howard

Purpose: Improve reading textbooks and instruction.

Key Provisions:

- Requires Essential Knowledge and Skills in English Language Arts must provide reading instruction that is - (a) based on scientific research, (b) grade-level specific, (c) increase in depth and complexity from one grade to the next, (d) focus on core knowledge, (e) include essential components of reading instruction and instruction as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act;
- Requires conforming and nonconforming textbooks to present elements of reading in an educationally effective manner, as proven by scientifically-based

- research, and the essential components of reading instruction and instruction to promote reading as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act;
- Requires teacher editions of reading textbooks to address - (a) structure of the English Language, (b) relationships between reading, writing, and spelling, (c) planning and delivering appropriate reading instruction based on assessment and evaluation, and (d) independent reading of high quality books and the relationship of reading to improved reading performance;
 - Requires state assessments designed to assess the Essential Knowledge and Skills in pre-reading to assess pre-reading skills, including phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and letter knowledge in kindergarten; and
 - Requires administration of and state funding for a national norm-referenced test for third grade students.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Require vocabulary instruction to be included in textbooks, the Essential Knowledge and Skills, and state assessments;
- Require standards for reading proficiency to be established for each grade level that are comparable to or higher than standards for reading proficiency established by the National Assessment of Educational Progress and incorporate these standards into the Essential Knowledge and Skills, textbooks, and state assessments; and
- Require the state to fund and administer a nationally recognized, norm-referenced test to be administered to students in grade one (instead of three).

Goal II: PEIMS Enhancement

1. S.B. 1066 by Shapiro and H.B. 2238 by Eissler

Purpose: Improve the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

Key Provisions:

- Requires the agency to publish an annual report that includes - (a) data standards, (b) descriptions of data collections and submission requirements, (c) descriptions of data elements and codes, (c) detailed responsibilities of districts, charters, service centers, and the agency related to data submission, and (d) description of data submission requirements including specifications for layout and edit;
- Directs the commissioner to create a policy advisory group to oversee data collections and reporting standards policies that includes - districts, charters, service centers, state agencies, and educational associations;
- Directs the commissioner to establish an agency committee to oversee data collections and reporting policies, with a subcommittee to review data collections and reporting standards;
- Establishes the commissioner's authority to approve changes to data and reporting standards without consulting a group, committee, or subcommittee; and
- Permits the agency authority to contract with a public or private entity for managing PEIMS.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Incorporate the provisions of H.B. 2126 as well as the recommended enhancements below.

2. H.B. 2126 by Murphy

Purpose: Improve the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

Key Provisions:

- Directs the commissioner to ensure that PEIMS contains a transcript for each student, including - (a) courses taken and grades, (b) identification number of the student's teacher in each class or in each course in a major subject area, (c) scores on national assessment instruments administered by the state and/or district, (d) disciplinary warning and actions, and (e) participation in a magnet school program that has special criteria for admission;
- Directs the commissioner to ensure that PEIMS contains a record for each teacher's training, continuing education, and professional development, including - (a) type of each certification held, (b) name of educator preparation program, major field of postsecondary study, courses completed, number of semester credit hours, and overall grade earned in each course, (c) number of years of teaching experience in specified grade levels or course and other experience in occupation other than teaching, both type and time, (d) continuing education and professional development activities, including number of instructional hours, type of instruction, instructor's name, name of entity providing instruction and date completed; and
- Requires the commissioner to adopt rules requiring districts and educator preparation programs to provide information for PEIMS.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Add annual individualized measure of student growth (value-added) as follows –
(a) The commissioner shall determine a method by which the agency may measure annual improvement in each individual student's achievement from one school year to the next on assessment instrument required by the Education Code; and
(b) The agency shall use a student's previous years' performance data on each required assessment to determine the student's expected annual improvement. The agency shall report that expected level of annual improvement and the actual level of annual improvement achieved to the district. For each school in the state, the agency shall publicly report the average annual improvement for all students who are in school on October 1 and who subsequently take the state assessments. These reports shall be separated by specific test and shall also be provided for each disaggregated subgroup (by NCLB definitions) for which there are ten students in the school. Within two years, the agency shall develop data systems to permit these reports to be prepared at the individual teacher and classroom level. The report shall state whether the student fell below, met, or exceeded the agency's expectation for improvement. The agency shall determine the necessary annual improvement required each year for a student to be prepared to pass a exit level or end-of-course assessment required for graduation. The agency shall report the necessary annual improvement required to the district. Each year, the report

must state whether the student fell below, met, or exceeded the necessary target for improvement;

- Require the commissioner, jointly with the comptroller and with assistance from contractors, to develop and implement a system for financial accountability that will bring transparency, including public reporting, to public education finance and provide for the establishment of financial accountability standards that are commensurate with academic standards, reaching the campus level by the 2009-10 school year;
- Require that the financial accountability measurement and control software of the system be designed to systematically evaluate districts, component campuses, and charter schools, as well as identify districts and campuses that achieve high levels of academic outcomes and operate in a cost-efficient manner as a basis for financial best practices analysis and financial performance standards development;
- Increase the frequency of the collection of district financial information to a quarterly basis to allow for more responsive reporting;
- Require that the TEA publish district and campus financial reports on its web site in an easy to understand manner and that all districts post their cash receipts and disbursements ledger on their web sites on a monthly basis;

Goals III, IV, V and VI: Educator Effectiveness

1. S.B. 1643 by Shapiro and H.B. 3420, 3421, 3422 and 3423 by Eissler

Purpose: Improve educator preparation programs, training, continuing education, appraisal, and terms of employment of public school teachers and administrators.

Key Provisions:

- Directs the commissioner to adopt rules for educator preparation program accountability that include the performance of beginning teachers for the first three years based on the measure of annual improvement already established by Section 39.034;
- Also directs the commissioner to base educator preparation program accountability on the perseverance of beginning teachers for at least five years after certification;
- Requires continuing education to be evidence based and linked to areas of the teacher's appraisal that requires improvement;
- Requires the commissioner to revise or develop a new performance appraisal system that (a) considers teachers' qualifications in the recommended appraisal process and criteria, and (b) requires student performance to constitute a majority of the teacher's appraisal, of which 35 percent must be based on objective, quantifiable measures and at least 10 percent must be based on overall school performance;
- Requires schools to develop a performance improvement plan when a teacher receives an unsatisfactory appraisal, and recommend or require teachers to complete evidence-based professional improvement activities;

- Provides new language pertaining to contracts – (a) allows schools to decline a renew a teacher’s term contract if the teacher receives an unsatisfactory appraisal for two consecutive years, (b) when a teacher employed under a continuing contract receives an unsatisfactory appraisal for two consecutive years, districts may employ the teacher only under a term contract, and (c) requires districts to decline to renew the contract of a teacher who receives an unsatisfactory appraisal for three consecutive years; and
- Establishes similar language for the appraisals of principals and assistant principals.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Require districts to use the commissioner’s performance appraisal system or to develop a local alternative that meets standards established by the commissioner and is approved by the commissioner;
- Direct the commissioner to develop a value added measure of student achievement, annual and individual, as described above on page 5-6 to be used as the basis for evaluating teacher preparation programs;
- Incorporate metrics for academic effectiveness in the performance appraisal system and assess teachers’ academic effectiveness based on reliable and verifiable measures of student performance;
- Require schools to provide and teachers to complete continuing education/professional development that have been shown to improve instructional effectiveness that are related to areas needing improvement when a teacher receives an unsatisfactory appraisal or when a teacher’s academic effectiveness is identified as unsatisfactory;
- Require all teachers to be appraised annually and for beginning teachers to be appraised no less than twice annually;
- Require schools to decline to renew contracts of teachers who have been appraised as academically ineffective for three consecutive years despite completion of continuing education/professional development designed to improve instructional success;
- Direct the commissioner to develop a process for setting aside contracts of educators in schools that fail to be rated as acceptable for two out of three years;
- Require all educator preparation programs to provide scientifically-based reading instruction to all elementary, middle, and special education teachers;
- Require prospective elementary, middle, and special education teachers to pass the reading section of the certification exam;
- Require prospective middle and high school teachers to pass the section of the certification exam that relates to the subject area they intend to teach;
- Create a two-year temporary certificate leading to standard certification as superintendent, principal, and assistant principal for candidates who, in the judgment of employing district trustees, have significant management and leadership skills and experience;
- Codify the State Board for Educator Certification rule pertaining to Temporary Teacher Certificate for teachers in grades 7-12 (Rule 232.5) without mandating guidelines for district implementation and eliminate the guidelines presently in the rule; and

- Require all teacher preparation programs to provide the equivalent of at least 3 months full-time student/apprentice teaching.

Goal VII: Deregulation and Choice

1. S.B. 4 by Shapiro

Purpose: Improve open-enrollment charter schools and creating public charter districts.

Key Provisions:

- Dissolve all open-enrollment charters on August 1, 2008;
- To secure a license to continue to operate, charters must meet the following criteria – (a) total assets that exceed total liabilities, and (b) at least 25 percent of all students administered an assessment performed satisfactorily on TAKS in math and reading/English language arts (averaged over 2006 and 2007);
- Charters would be revoked after two years of unacceptable academic or financial performance;
- A charter does not have the right to a hearing or appeal when its license is revoked;
- There is a safe harbor for charters that enroll at least 85 percent of students residing in a residential facility and charters that began operating on or after September 1, 2006;
- Disallows the State Board of Education from approving more than 214 charters for public charter districts;
- Authorizes the commissioner to withhold approval for increasing a charter’s enrollment, grade-levels, campuses, or boundaries unless strict, specific criteria are met;
- Furnishes an allotment for instructional facilities to charters rated recognized or exemplary for two consecutive years;
- Requires charters to provide transportation to students to the same extent a school district is required by law;
- Requires charters to provide to parents/guardians written notice of the qualifications of each professional employee (including professional/educational degree, certification, and relevant experience);
- Establishes specific salary increases for charter employees; and
- Extends immunity from liability protecting traditional public schools to charters.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Remove the cap on the number of charters or public charter districts that may be authorized by the State Board of Education;
- Require all public schools, including charters, to provide to parents/guardians written notice of the qualifications of each professional employee (including professional/educational degree, certification, and relevant experience);
- Remove all regulation that is not currently applied to traditional public schools; and
- Create a second charter authorizing entity that is appointed by the governor and comprises a broad selection of primary education stakeholders.

2. S.B. 1000 by Shapiro

Purpose: Improve accessibility to services of students with autism or autism spectrum disorder.

Key Provisions:

- Allows students who is diagnosed with autism or autism spectrum disorder to attend any public school in any district;
- Also allows qualifying students to attend a nongovernmental community-based educational establishment that provides for the educational needs of students with autism which meets specific criteria that include accreditation by an accrediting association recognized by the commissioner;
- Provides for the transfer of state aid between school districts and state funding to a qualifying school in an amount equal to the annual funding to which the school district in which the student resides would be entitled; and
- Establishes requirements for the academic accountability of qualifying schools that include (a) creating an individualized education program for each student, (b) annually administering the appropriate state assessment or a nationally norm-referenced assessment approved by the agency, and (c) providing assessment results to the student's parents and the aggregated results to the public; and
- Requires the commissioner to contract with an impartial and experienced organization to conduct an annual evaluation of the program.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Direct the commissioner to contract with an independent, experienced, and recognized research entity to evaluate the effectiveness of this grant and district programs.

3. H.B. 18 by Corte

Purpose: Increase educational choice and opportunity.

Key Provisions:

- Provides vouchers to pay the costs of attending a private school if the child was enrolled in public school during the preceding year and is any of the following (a) educationally disadvantaged, (b) eligible to attend school in a district that is among the six largest districts in the state, (c) failed to perform satisfactorily on the most recent state assessment, and (e) eligible for the Public Education Grant but had an application to attend another school in the district rejected;
- Requires school districts to provide parental notification of eligibility for a voucher;
- Establishes the value of voucher as an amount equal to the total average per student funding amount in the school district the child would otherwise attend for maintenance and operations, including state and local funding, but excluding money from the available school fund;
- Requires private schools accepting vouchers to be accredited by a private organization recognized by the commissioner;

- Requires private schools accepting vouchers to administer a state assessment or other comparable assessments approved by the commissioner;
- Requires private schools to report the school's performance on the academic excellence indicators for students with vouchers; and
- Directs the commissioner to evaluate the voucher program.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Direct the commissioner to contract with an independent, experienced, and recognized research entity to evaluate the academic effectiveness of the voucher program on students who use vouchers and those students who remain in public schools.

4. H.B. 19 by Corte

Purpose: Create public education voucher program for students with disabilities.

Key Provisions:

- Offers vouchers to students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are eligible to participate in the district's special education program, and have been provided an individualized education program required by law;
- Requires districts to provide written notice of student eligibility for a voucher;
- Provides a scholarship in the amount equal to the amount of funding to which the school district in which the student resides would be entitled, but not financed by any money appropriated from the available school fund;
- Requires private schools to be accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the commissioner;
- Requires schools that accept vouchers to administer the appropriate assessment required by the Texas Education Code or a nationally norm-referenced assessment approved by the agency; and
- Requires schools that accept vouchers to provide the student's assessment results to parents and aggregated results of assessments to the public.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Direct the commissioner to contract with an independent, experienced, and recognized research entity to evaluate the academic effectiveness of the voucher program on students who use vouchers and those students who remain in public schools.

5. S.B. 1506 by Janek

Purpose: Create an urban school choice pilot program for certain public school students.

Key Provisions:

- Provides vouchers to economically disadvantaged students in Texas public schools who meet one or more of the following qualifications – (a) at risk of dropping out of school, (b) dropped out of school, (c) victim or sibling of a victim of violence, (d) enrolled in special education program, (e) identified as a student with limited English proficiency, and (f) who attend public school in a district - (i) that is the largest district in the country in which a majority of students are

- economically disadvantaged, and (ii) where at least 90 percent of students in the district are economically disadvantaged;
- Allows schools to participate in the voucher program and receive vouchers if schools are accredited with an association recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission;
 - Directs the comptroller to select one or more independent, privately funded nonprofit organizations to establish and operate schools of choice resource centers in each district participating in the voucher program;
 - Directs schools of choice resource centers to – (a) provide written notice to parents of eligible students, (b) assist parents to become informed education consumers, (c) provide information about education alternatives, (d) assist parents, schools and districts in complying with program, and (e) receive and process applications for participation;
 - Funds voucher at - (a) lesser amount of either 90 percent of districts total operating expenditures or the school’s actual average annual cost per student, or (b) an amount equal to the amount of funding to which the district would be eligible if the student is enrolled in a special education program or bilingual education or special language services;
 - Charges the comptroller to distribute voucher funding for qualified students to public or private schools that qualify to receive vouchers, and establish rules regarding application and approval procedures for students and schools participating in the voucher program; and
 - Requires schools that participate in the voucher program to – (a) administer the appropriate state assessment or a nationally norm-referenced assessment that is approved by the comptroller, and (b) report results to the student’s parent and comptroller.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Direct the comptroller to contract with an independent, experienced, and recognized research entity to evaluate the effectiveness of this grant and district programs.

6. S.B. 1513 by West

Purpose: Establish a dropout prevention and opportunity program for public school students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out.

Key Provisions:

- Provides scholarships to students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out;
- Directs the commissioner to develop rules for internet degree program providers and approve providers that include – (a) public/charter schools, (b) community colleges, (c) institutions of higher education, (d) an internet degree program, or (e) an accredited private school; and
- Funds the scholarship at an amount equal to the amount of state and local funding per student to which the school district the eligible student last attended was entitled.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Direct the commissioner to contract with an independent, experienced, and recognized research entity to evaluate the effectiveness of this grant and district programs.

7. H.B. 277 by Madden

Purpose: Create state virtual school network.

Key Provisions:

- Directs the State Board of Education to - (a) create a virtual school network, (b) contract with the agency to employ individuals or contract with a service center to operate the network, (c) ensure a full range of electronic courses and programs (including Advanced Placement Courses) are available, (d) establish criteria for electronic courses and programs offered by provider districts and schools, (e) create an approval process for electronic courses and programs, (f) establish the cost of providing an electronic course or program, and (g) create a list of approved courses and programs offered by provider districts and charters;
- Permits contracts between a school district or charter with a virtual school service provider;
- Allows districts and schools to offer electronic courses in this and other states;
- Allows students to take an electronic course or program through the district or school in which the student is enrolled or another provider school district or charter;
- Allows students who reside in the state but are not enrolled in a school district or charter to take an electronic course or program from one or more providers;
- Requires teachers of electronic courses to be certified to teach the course and grade level;
- Requires districts and charters to report information about electronic courses;
- Requires electronic courses to provide at least the same number of instructional hours as required for traditional courses;
- Allocates state and federal funding for the cost of operating the virtual school network; and
- Denies districts or charters the authority to unreasonably deny the request of a parent to enroll the student in an electronic course or program and defines unreasonable requests.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Require electronic courses and programs to be based on the Essential Knowledge and Skills;
- Require students in the State Virtual School to take the same assessments as are administered in the traditional version of the course, as applicable;
- Direct the commissioner to establish system of academic accountability and accreditation for electronic providers; and
- Direct the commissioner to commission an independent audit by nationally recognized experts to ensure the academic effectiveness and financial efficiency of the State Virtual School Network.

Other Bills Related to TIER Policy Goals

1. H.B. 1769 by Anchia

Purpose: Successful completion of four foundation courses for high school graduation.

Key Provisions:

- Directs State Board of Education to allow students to comply with graduation requirements by successfully completing career and technology courses in place of a math or science courses; and
- Allows a student to substitute no more than two career and technology courses for required high school math and science courses.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Allow this substitution only for graduation under the minimum requirements (not the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program).

2. S.B. 1031 by Shapiro

Purpose: Improve state high school assessment program.

Key Provisions:

- Establishes an electronic student records system;
- Directs the agency to adopt end-of-course assessments for high school courses in Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English I, English II, English III, World Geography, World History, and U.S. History;
- Requires school districts to base 15 percent of the course grade on the results of the end-of-course assessment;
- Requires districts to provide accelerated instruction to student who has not performed satisfactorily on an end-of-course assessment;
- Allows students who do not perform satisfactorily on end-of-course assessments to retake the assessment;
- Requires optional questions measuring college readiness to be incorporated in end-of-course assessments, but disallows the use of a student's performance on these questions for the purpose of determining the student's performance on the end-of-course assessment;
- Directs the agency to recommend a timeline for assisting end-of-course assessments by computer;
- Charges the commissioner to adopt rules requiring students in the Recommended or Advanced High School Program to take end-of-course assessments;
- Predicates graduation on a cumulative score for all end-of-course tests;
- Allows a student's satisfactory performance on an Advanced Placement Test, International Baccalaureate Exam, SAT Subject Test, Dual Credit Exam, or other instruments to be determined by the commissioner to substitute for end-of-course assessments;
- Eliminates the 11th grade exit or high school graduation assessment;

- Introduces end-of-course assessments for students entering the ninth grade during the 2009-2010 school year, but for students entering tenth grade or higher during this year, the commissioner will use current state assessments for campus and district ratings;
- Introduces a state-funded preliminary college preparation assessment that is nationally norm-referenced in eighth grade, a college readiness assessment (PSAT/NMSQT) in the tenth grade, and a nationally norm-referenced assessment used by colleges and universities for admissions in the twelfth grade; and
- Directs the commissioner to establish a system for ensuring security in administration of assessments and establishes a criminal penalty for violating the security of assessments.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Include ACT assessments as one of the substitutions for end-of-course exams;
- Schedule dates for phasing in use of college readiness assessment for determining a student's and school's performance;
- Require districts to use scores on end-of-course assessments to determine if students satisfactorily complete required high school courses and quality for graduation;
- Direct the commissioner to commission an independent audit by nationally recognized experts to ensure end-of-course tests are aligned with and set passing standards commensurate with post-secondary readiness; and
- Replace criminal penalties with costly financial penalties for violating assessment security.

3. S. B. 379 by Seliger

Purpose: Introduction of high school end-of-course assessments.

Key Provisions:

- High school end-of-course provisions similar to S.B. 1031

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Same as recommendations for S.B. 1031

4. H.B. 3425 by Eissler

Purpose: Improve public school accountability system.

Key Provisions:

- Creates a select committee on public school accountability to conduct comprehensive review, conduct public hearings, and report recommendations for reform; and
- Sunsets the public school accountability system on September 1, 2009.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Replace sunset provisions with requirement that new system be established on September 1, 2009.

5. H.B. 1136 by Hochberg

Purpose: Improve assignment of students to classroom teachers.

Key Provisions:

- Limits assignment of students in kindergarten through grade 6 to no more than two consecutive school years to a teacher who (a) has less than one year teaching experience, and (b) does not hold the appropriate certification; and
- Similarly limits assignment of students in grade 7 or higher taking a subject that is assessed by state instruments.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Replace one year teaching experience with three years;
- Require school to provide written notification of teacher qualifications and experience to parents of students enrolled in the teacher's class;
- Disallow assignment of students who have failed state assessments in any grade or course to a teacher who (a) has less than three years experience, and (b) does not hold appropriate certification.

6. H.B. 2237 by Eissler

Purpose: Improve high school success and college readiness.

Key Provisions:

- Directs the State Board of Education to incorporate college readiness standards into the Essential Knowledge and Skills of the foundation curriculum beginning with the 2007-08 school year;
- Transforms the state, federal, and private funds designated for the purpose of improving high school success and college readiness into district grants;
- Defines criteria for these grants that include - (a) individualized graduation plan, (b) instruction from highly qualified teachers, (c) access to online diagnostic and assessment instruments, (d) accelerated academic instruction;
- Requires funds to be used for programs that demonstrate the greatest potential for improving high school success and college readiness, and identifies permissive programs;
- Permits districts that receive grants to contract with a private organization to assist with programming;
- Supports restructuring of academically unacceptable high school campuses directly or through contract with a private entity; and
- Directs the commissioner to research and evaluate programs implemented through these grants.

TIER Recommendations for Additions to Strengthen Bill:

- Require the State Board of Education to contract with an independent, nationally-recognized expert research entity to evaluate and validate that the public school curriculum will culminate in college readiness for high school graduates ;
- Direct the commissioner to contract with an independent, experienced, and recognized research entity to evaluate the effectiveness of this grant and district programs.