

Texas High Performance Schools Consortium

Texas has long been a leader in accountability. Creating a path toward an improved system will require local input and research. School districts around the state have expressed strong interest in helping create a next generation accountability system that is more effective and efficient and that supports innovation in teaching and learning.

S.B. 1557 would create a Texas High Performance Schools Consortium of up to 20 districts and one open-enrollment charter school to begin this innovative work. The Commissioner would create the consortium, allowing for flexibility in how the consortium approaches curriculum and assessment requirements.

Purpose. The consortium would emphasize:

- Digital learning
- High-priority “power standards”
- Multiple assessments for learning
- An effective and efficient accountability system that, in the long term, could improve the quality of student learning, reduce the numbers of assessments, and allow greater parent and community involvement

The bill allows the participating school districts to identify restrictions that unduly restrict the improvement of student learning – including federal laws – and allows the Commissioner to seek a waiver from overly restrictive federal laws.

Timeline. The consortium would begin its initial work in the 2012-13 school year:

- January 1, 2012 – The Commissioner of Education adopts rules applicable to the Consortium, in consultation with interested school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and other appropriate interested persons
- March 1, 2012 – The Consortium application forms are available
- July 1, 2012 – Applications are due
- 2012-13 School Year – Consortium begins Phase I (digital learning, work on standards, formative or other assessments that are in addition to the existing STAAR and EOC system)
- December 1, 2012 – Report to the Legislature and Governor on progress of the Consortium
- January-May 2013 – Legislative session
- 2013-14 School Year – If the USDE waives federal law and the Commissioner of Education waives state law, the Consortium may begin Phase II (assessments and accountability, including stratified random sampling, unless parents opt-in their children to be tested every year under STAAR/EOC)
- December 1, 2014 – Report to the Legislature and Governor on progress of the Consortium
- 2014-15 School Year and Beyond – Consortium work continues