

House Bill 743

Statute Amended or Added: Adds TEC, §39.023(a-11) through (a-13), §39.0236, and §39.0381.

Summary: As added by HB 743, TEC, §39.023(a-11) requires an entity independent of the agency or the agency's contracted testing vendor to verify the reliability and validity of the grades 3-8 STAAR assessments.

New TEC, §39.023(a-12) imposes specific time requirements on the administration of grades 3-8 assessments. For grades 3-5, the assessments must be designed in such a way that 85% of the students can finish within 120 minutes. For grades 6-8, 85% of the students must be able to finish the assessments within 180 minutes.

Added TEC, §39.023(a-13) specifies that an assessment given in grades 3-8 may not take longer than 8 hours to administer, and the administration must occur in a single day. This subsection would require the grades 4 and 7 writing assessments – currently administered over two days -- to be redesigned to be one-day assessments.

New TEC, §39.0236 requires the agency to conduct a study regarding the TEKS curriculum standards and the assessment instruments administered under TEC, §39.023 to students in grades 3-8 (as specified by TEC, §39.0236(b)(2)). The study must evaluate the contents of assessments administered to students in grades 3-8, how the tests assess standards essential to student success, whether the assessments should test supporting standards, identify the portion of the TEKS that can be accurately assessed, and assess how current assessments compare to the standards. The results of the study are due by March 1, 2016 to the State Board of Education (SBOE). The SBOE is required to submit the report and its recommendations based on the study to the Texas Legislature by May 1, 2016.

HB 743 adds TEC, §39.0381 to require the agency to, by rule, implement a methodology for the auditing and monitoring of the assessment contractor for services related to the development and administration of assessments under TEC, §39.023. TEC, §39.0381(b) specifies that the agency ensure all new and renewed assessment contracts include provisions to allow contract compliance reviews without advance notice to monitor contractor performance.