

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1518
By: Dutton (West, Royce)
Education
5/13/2003
Engrossed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Having high school dropout rates affects the Texas economy and decreases not only the state's future tax revenues but also its ability to attract new business. Some believe that Texas' method of reporting dropouts has obscured the dropout problem, resulting in the loss of federal grants for certain school districts. H.B. 1518 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the accelerated instruction program and to include an analysis of the effectiveness of each dropout reduction program. This bill also requires TEA to collect and report dropout and school completion data and requires a dropout data oversight committee to review TEA's standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing school. H.B. 1518 requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to adopt rules under which the commissioner must grant a one-year exemption from audits related to state compensatory education to a school district that consistently achieves significant reductions in dropout rates, but prohibits the commissioner from granting an exemption to a district that does not make consistent significant progress in reducing its dropout rate.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 3 (Section 39.072, Education Code) and SECTION 4 (Section 42.152, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 29.081(c), Education Code, to require the accelerated instruction evaluation to include an analysis of the effectiveness of each program described in the campus and district improvement plans for reducing the disparities described by this subsection. Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to ensure that each school district complies with this subsection.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Section 29.088, as follows:

Sec. 29.088. DROPOUT DATA OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the dropout data oversight committee to review the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing school before the agency implements the standards and definitions. Sets forth the required composition of the committee.

(b) Requires a committee member appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, or speaker of the house to represent the public and to have a demonstrated interest in dropout prevention and public education.

(c) Provides that the committee is subject to Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 39.072, Education Code, by adding Subsection (d) to provide that for purposes of Subsection (c), a student who attends a program serving students who are pregnant or who are parents that is based at a single campus, but serves students from more than one campus, is considered to be a student at the campus to which the student would regularly be assigned. Authorizes the commissioner to make rules to implement this subsection and to

implement this subsection by an appeal of the campus rating.

SECTION 4. Amends Sections 42.152(d) and (r), Education Code, as follows:

(d) Requires TEA to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of accelerated instruction and support programs provided under Section 29.081 (Compensatory, Intensive, and Accelerated Instruction) for students at risk of dropping out of school. Requires TEA to organize and share the information it collects during its evaluation with local districts. Requires the commissioner, if TEA cannot perform this evaluation with existing resources, to withhold from the total amount appropriated for allotments under this section an amount the commissioner determines is necessary to perform the evaluation and reduce each district's tier one allotments in the manner described for a reduction in allotments under Section 42.253 (Distribution of Foundation School Fund).

(r) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules under which the commissioner must grant a one-year exemption from the requirements of Subsection (q), rather than (g), to a school district that consistently achieves significant reductions in the disparity in performance between students described by Section 29.081(d) (Compensatory, Intensive, and Accelerated Instruction) and all other students. Prohibits the commissioner from granting an exemption to a district that does not make consistent significant progress in reducing its dropout rate. Deletes text referring to the group of students who have failed to perform satisfactorily in the preceding school year on an assessment instrument who subsequently perform on those assessment instruments at a level that meets or exceeds a level prescribed by commissioner rule. Requires the commissioner, based on the most recent information available, each year to determine if a school district is entitled to an exemption for the following school year and to notify the district and the district's board of trustees of that determination.

SECTION 5. (a) Provides that this Act takes effect beginning with the 2003-2004 school year.

(b) Requires certain elected officials and the state auditor, as soon as practicable on or after the effective date of this Act, as provided by Section 29.088, Education Code, as added by this Act to perform certain duties.

SECTION 6. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.