

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
78R1371 SLO-D

S.B. 257  
By: West  
Education  
3/11/2003  
As Filed

### **DIGEST AND PURPOSE**

School dropouts affect the Texas economy, decreasing 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 state's dropout problem, resulting in the loss of federal grants for certain school districts. As proposed, S.B. 257 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the accelerated instruction program and to include an analysis of the effectiveness of each program; requires TEA to collect and report dropout and school completion data; requires a dropout data oversight committee to review TEA's standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing school; and 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 previously granted to the commissioner of education is modified in SECTION 3 (Section 42.152) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 29.081(c), Education Code, to require the evaluation of the accelerated instruction program 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. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 29C, Education Code, by adding Sections 29.088 and 29.089, as follows:

Sec. 29.088. STUDENT DROPOUT INFORMATION. Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to collect data from school districts relating to dropout and school completion rates using the dropout definitions and data standards adopted by the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Sec. 29.089. DROPOUT DATA OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the dropout data oversight committee to review TEA's standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing school before TEA implements the standards and definitions. Requires the committee to be composed of certain people.

(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

SECTION 3. 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 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.

(r) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules under which the commissioner must grant a one-year exemption from the requirements of Subsection (q) to a school district that consistently achieves significant reductions in the disparity in performance between students described by Section 29.081(d) 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. Requires the commissioner each year, based on the most recent information available, to determine if a school district is entitled to an exemption for the following school year and notify the district and the district's board of trustees of that determination. Deletes language requiring the commissioner to grant a one-year exemption to a district in which a group of students performs at a certain improved level on assessment instruments the year after failing to do so.

SECTION 4. (a) Provides that this Act takes effect beginning with the 2003-2004 school year.

(b) Requires the appointment of the dropout data oversight committee as soon as practicable on or after the Acts's effective date.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.