

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
78R1374 CAS-D

S.B. 83
By: Wentworth
Education
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Under current law, a school district may provide for a period of silence at the beginning of the first class of each school day, during which a student may reflect or meditate. As proposed, S.B. 83 would require Texas' public schools to set aside a minute each day for silent prayer, meditation, or reflection. This bill repeals Section 25.082(b), Education Code, which allows, but does not require, a school district to provide a period of silence at the beginning of each school day for reflection or meditation.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 25.901, Education Code, as follows:

Section 25.901. New heading: EXERCISE OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO PRAY; OBSERVANCE OF ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text and makes a conforming change relating to the addition of Subsection (b).

(b) Requires the board of trustees of each school district to provide for the observance of one minute of silence during each school day at each school in the district. Provides that during that one-minute period, each student may, as the student chooses, reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract another student. Requires each teacher or other school employee in charge of students during that period to ensure that each of those students remains seated and silent and does not act in a manner that is likely to interfere with or distract another student.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 25.082(b), Education Code (regarding the school day).

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act applies with the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.