

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 780
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Technology funding for school districts has remained near the same level for the last decade, and the Texas Technology Immersion Pilot project has been limited to schools that were selected for the project before September 1, 2005. Texas school children need increased access to technology in order to become technologically literate and obtain the skills necessary for a modern-day workforce and the state needs to regain momentum in educational technology by dedicating funds to creating and funding modern-day classrooms.

As proposed, S.B. 780 increases the technology allotment over the next five years in order to permit schools and districts to effectively plan and implement programs that improve student learning, empower more students to pursue higher education, increase teacher productivity, and increase parental and community involvement in education. It also expands the Texas Technology Immersion Pilot project to high schools that enroll students from middle schools that are currently experimenting with the project and expands the project to 31 additional sites.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 32.005, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (c), and adding Subsections (a-1), (a-2), (b-1), and (b-2), as follows:

(a) Entitles open-enrollment charter schools, in addition to school districts, to an increased allotment of \$300, rather than \$30, for each student in average daily attendance, or a greater, rather than different, amount for any year provided by appropriation.

(a-1) Provides that Subsection (a) applies beginning with the 2011-2012 school year. Sets forth increasing allotments to which a school district is entitled for each school year prior to the 2011-2012 school year.

(a-2) Provides that Subsection (a-1) and this section expire September 1, 2011.

(b-1) Requires a school district's allotment under this section to be used in accordance with the district's long-range technology plan filed with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Sets forth specific outcomes at the school, classroom, and teacher-student levels that the plan must address.

(b-2) Requires TEA to evaluate available technological solutions to determine whether any of the evaluated technological solutions may be used in compliance with Subsections (b) and (b-1). Requires TEA to publish and update quarterly a list of evaluated and usable technological solutions in compliance with the above subsections.

(c) Provides that, in addition to funds appropriated from the telecommunications infrastructure fund, the amount authorized to be appropriated to an allotment under this section from the available school fund may only be appropriated to the extent that the amount appropriated from the telecommunications infrastructure fund does not fully fund the allotment, and that any amounts authorized to be appropriated to such an allotment

from any other funds available for that purpose identified in the General Appropriations Act may only be appropriated to the extent that the amounts appropriated from the telecommunications infrastructure and available school funds do not fully fund the allotment.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 32, Education Code, by adding Section 32.007, as follows:

Sec. 32.007. AGREEMENT WITH PUBLIC BROADCASTING STATION. (a) Authorizes the commissioner of education (commissioner) to enter into an agreement with a public broadcasting station (station), or consortium of stations, under which the station or consortium will provide online instructional content and educational materials.

(b) Authorizes the commissioner to use funds appropriated to TEA to, under an agreement under Subsection (a), make instructional materials available through stations for the purposes of instruction, professional development, and adult education.

(c) Requires an agreement under Subsection (a) to provide access to instructional materials and online content to persons throughout the state.

(d) Authorizes the commissioner, for purposes of providing high-quality online instructional materials under this section, to use federal funds appropriated for that purpose or to use unexpended funds appropriated to TEA for educational purposes, including adult education.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 32.153(a), Education Code, as added by Chapter 834, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, to delete the existing requirement that TEA use only undedicated and unobligated money from the general revenue fund for the purposes of a pilot project to provide a wireless mobile computing device to students in participating schools.

SECTION 4. Amends the heading of Section 32.154, Education Code, as added by Chapter 834, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, to read as follows:

Sec. 32.154. SCHOOL SELECTION.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 32.154, Education Code, as added by Chapter 834, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (a-1), as follows:

(a-1) Sets forth additional schools which TEA is required to select to participate in the pilot project for the 2007-2008 and subsequent school years.

(b) Changes a criteria that TEA is required to use in selecting participant schools from a consideration of whether a school's limited access to educational resources could be improved using certain wireless devices and technologies to a consideration of whether that access could be improved using electronic textbooks or technological equipment that contribute to student learning. Deletes the existing requirement that TEA select districts in need of the pilot project. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 6. Repealer: Sections 32.154(a) and (c), Education Code, as added by Chapter 834, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003 (regarding a district's authorization to apply for the project and the requirements as the minimum number and types of schools required to participate in the project).

SECTION 7. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.