

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2542
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Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current projections indicate that Texas will have lower levels of educational attainment by 2040 than it has today. For that reason, the Texas Legislature has shifted the focus of high school graduation from an undefined notion of high school proficiency to a concept of postsecondary readiness. However, to actually increase education attainment, Texas students must make informed choices about their studies after high school graduation.

H.B. 2542 authorizes school districts to excuse up to two days' absence for a high school student during the student's junior and senior years of high school visiting an institution of higher education to determine a student's interest in attending the college or university.

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 25.087, Education Code, by adding Subsection (b-2), as follows:

(b-2) Authorizes a school district to excuse a student from attending school to visit an institution of higher education accredited by a generally recognized accrediting organization during the student's junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education, provided that the district may not excuse for this purpose more than two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year, and the district adopts a policy to determine when an absence will be excused for this purpose and a procedure to verify the student's visit at the institution of higher education.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 25.087(c), Education Code, as added by Chapter 479 (H.B. 2455), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, as follows:

(c) Prohibits a student whose absence is excused under Subsection (b) (Excused Absences) or (b-2) from being penalized for that absence and requires that the student be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district. Requires that a student whose absence is excused under Subsection (b) or (b-2) be allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed on those days. Requires that the day of absence be counted as a day of compulsory attendance if the student satisfactorily completes the school work.

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.