

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R5302 JSL-D

S.B. 783
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Education
4/23/2013
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

H.B. 121, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, required schools to create policies related to teen dating violence and awareness education. That legislation did not dictate a curriculum or the specific policies so that local communities can decide these for themselves. Organizations like the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) continue to help implement the requirement by partnering with other statewide education agencies to offer best practice policies.

There has been relative success across the state in implementing these requirements. Districts are creating policies and awareness education in high schools, but this is not occurring as commonly at middle schools despite the statute's current requirements. TCFV and its public policy committee have identified the need to begin earlier in addressing dating violence. Although high schools remain a priority, boys and girls are just beginning to develop their ability to create healthy relationship at the middle school level.

Dating starts in middle school; in a nationwide study, 47 percent of youth between the ages of 11 and 14 report having been in a relationship. Moreover, 72 percent of youth begin dating by the age of 14.

Dating violence is prevalent; one in three adolescents in the United States is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner.

Dating violence affects a student's education; studies indicate teens abused by a dating partner have higher rates of truancy, more negative contact with their teachers, and increased conflict with other students. Half of students who experience dating violence say some of the abuse occurred on school grounds.

S.B. 783 clarifies and supports the implementation of statutorily required dating violence policies in each school district, including awareness education for middle school students, teachers, counselors, and parents. The bill clarifies the requirement that every district improvement plan must address the required dating violence policies under Section 37.0831 (Dating Violence Policies), Education Code. The bill also requires that the districtwide improvement plan, an annual self-check by school districts, should include an appraisal of the teen dating violence policies and awareness education efforts.

As proposed, S.B. 783 amends current law relating to inclusion in school district improvement plans of policies to prevent dating violence.

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 11.252(a), Education Code, as follows:

- (a) Requires that the school district improvement plan required under this Section 11.252 (District-Level Planning and Decision-Making) include provisions for:

(1)-(3) Makes no change to these subdivisions;

(4) strategies for providing to middle school, junior high school, and high school students, those students' teachers and counselors, and those students' parents certain information, including information about the district's dating violence policy adopted under Section 37.0831;

(5)-(7) Makes no change to these subdivisions;

(8)-(9) Makes nonsubstantive changes; and

(10) carrying out the elements of the district's dating violence policy required under Section 37.0831 at each middle school, junior high school, and high school in the district.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 37.0831(a), Education Code, to require each school district to adopt a dating violence policy to be included in the district improvement plan under Section 11.252 and to implement the policy at each middle school, junior high school, and high school in the district, rather than requiring each school district to require each school district to adopt and implement a dating violence policy to be included in the district improvement plan under Section 11.252.

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.