

SUBJECT: Allowing compensatory education funds for social and emotional skills

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 13 ayes — Dutton, Lozano, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley,  
M. González, Huberty, K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Dena Petty, Mentors Care; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Laura Guerra-Cardus, Children’s Defense Fund-Texas; Charles Luke, Coalition for Education Funding; Jodi Duron, Elgin ISD; Elisa Tamayo, Emergence Health Network; Bruce Gearing, Leander ISD; Bill Kelly, Mayor’s Office, City of Houston; Ana O’Quin, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) TX; Charles Gaines, Raise Your Hand Texas; Joel Giorgio, Social Emotional Learning Alliance for Texas; Grover Campbell, TASB; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Dena Donaldson, Texas AFT; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Amanda Brownson, Texas Association of School Business Officials; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Alycia Castillo, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Starlee Coleman, Texas Public Charter Schools Association; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Christy Rome, Texas School Coalition; Ashley Ford, The Arc of Texas; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; and nine individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mary Castle and Jonathan Covey, Texas Values Action)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin and Leonardo Lopez, Texas Education Agency)

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code sec. 48.104 establishes a compensatory education allotment for students who are educationally disadvantaged. School districts generally must use these funds for instructional purposes, but they also may be used to provide child-care services or assistance with child-care expenses for students at risk of dropping out of school or to pay costs associated with services provided through a life skills program.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 332 would authorize the use of compensatory education allotment funds under the Foundation School Program to provide programs that build skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions.

The bill would specify that the use of allotment funds to provide child-care services or assistance with child-care expenses to a student at risk of dropping out of school would apply to such a student who is a parent.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 332 would address the impact on student mental health from recent events, including the pandemic and winter storm disaster, by giving schools the funding flexibility to address the social and emotional needs of students. School districts and charter schools could use some of their compensatory education allotment funds to hire counselors, provide teacher training, and implement curriculum.

Health care providers, educators, and parents have reported an increase in depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation in Texas children over the past year. CSHB 332 would provide schools with resources to help students develop and implement skills that help them learn, manage their emotions, and contribute positive behavior to the classroom.

While some say that the use of compensatory education funds should be confined to providing academic support, students also need support for their emotional needs in order to be ready to learn. Legislation enacted last

session to improve school safety and student mental health recognized the importance of addressing the social and emotional needs of students.

**CRITICS  
SAY:**

CSHB 332 would allow the use of compensatory education funds that is inconsistent with the main purpose for those funds, which is to close the learning gap for educationally disadvantaged students. The bill also could result in the use of state funds on programs that are not in line with the purpose of public education.