

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1696
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Concerned stakeholders report that the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is an option that "allows high-poverty schools to provide free breakfast and free lunch to all students, without depending on individual student applications." In fact the United States Department of Agriculture reports that "schools are reimbursed through a formula based on the number of students identified as low-income through participation in other programs (such as SNAP), foster care or homeless education services." In so doing, CEP has shown to be beneficial to many school districts throughout the state.

Since one in four Texas children live in poverty, and because a significant amount of Texas' student population is low income, interested parties believe that it would greatly benefit the state to determine how much cost savings public schools in the state can achieve through increased participation in CEP. Facilitating Texas children to eat more nutritious food leads to an increased concentration level in the classroom, as well as improved behavioral health.

In order to address this concern, S.B. 1696 directs the Texas Education Agency, along with the Texas Department of Agriculture, to conduct a study to determine CEP eligibility throughout the state. Additionally, public schools are directed to perform an economic analysis of cost savings that would result from participation in the program and to report the results of the analysis to overseeing agencies. By doing so, the state would become better informed about the benefits of CEP in schools.

As proposed, S.B. 1696 amends current law relating to a study on participation of public schools in a universal lunch program offered through the United States Department of Agriculture.

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 Subchapter Z, Chapter 33, Education Code, by adding Section 33.9011, as follows:

Sec. 33.9011. STUDY ON PROVIDING UNIVERSAL LUNCH. (a) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), with assistance from the Texas Department of Agriculture and not later than October 1, 2017, to conduct a study to determine the school districts (districts) and open-enrollment charter schools (schools) eligible to provide a universal lunch to all students through participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, as provided by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Pub. L. No. 111-296).

(b) Requires TEA, not later than December 1, 2017, to notify each district and school that is eligible to participate in CEP and to require each notified district and school to perform an economic analysis of cost savings that would result from participation in the program and report the results of the analysis to TEA not later than December 15, 2017.

(c) Requires TEA, not later than January 31, 2018, to submit a report to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and members of the legislature on the number of districts and schools eligible to provide a universal lunch to all students through participation in CEP and the potential cost savings that could result from that participation.

(d) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2018.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.