

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2144
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Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties suggest that changes to the public school finance system are necessary to meet the requirement under the Texas Constitution that the legislature establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools. S.B. 2144 seeks to provide the framework to facilitate these changes by establishing a commission to recommend improvements to the public school finance system.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 2144 amends the Education Code to establish the Texas Commission on Public School Finance to develop and make recommendations for improvements to the current public school finance system or for new methods of financing public schools. The bill sets out the composition of the 15-member commission, which includes members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives, and requires those officials in making the appointments to coordinate to ensure that the commission membership reflects, to the extent possible, the ethnic diversity of Texas and includes certain representation. The bill requires the governor to designate the commission's presiding officer and entitles a member of the commission to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing commission duties but not compensation for service. The bill requires staff members of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to provide administrative support for the commission and requires funding for the administrative and operational expenses of the commission to be provided by appropriation to TEA for that purpose.

S.B. 2144 requires the commission to develop recommendations to address issues related to the public school finance system, including the purpose of the public school finance system and the relationship between state and local funding in that system, the appropriate levels of local maintenance and operations and interest and sinking fund tax effort necessary to implement a public school finance system that complies with the requirements under the Texas Constitution, and policy changes to the public school finance system necessary to adjust for student demographics and the geographic diversity in Texas. The bill authorizes the commission to establish one or more working groups composed of not more than five members of the commission to study, discuss, and address specific policy issues and recommendations to refer to the commission for consideration. The bill requires the commission, not later than December 31,

2018, to prepare and deliver a report to the governor and the legislature that recommends statutory changes to improve the public school finance system, including any adjustments to funding to account for student demographics. The bill authorizes the commission to hold public meetings as needed to fulfill its duties and subjects the commission to state open meetings law and public information law. The commission is abolished and the bill's provisions expire January 8, 2019.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.