

- SUBJECT:** Eliminating requirements for community awareness of prekindergarten
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Eissler, Hochberg, Allen, Aycock, Dutton, Guillen, Huberty, Shelton, T. Smith, Weber
- 1 nay — Strama
- 0 absent
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Andrew Erben, Texas Institute for Education Reform; Ken McCraw, Texas Association of Community Schools)
- Against — Ted Melina Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jennifer Allmon, Texas Catholic Conference and Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas)
- BACKGROUND:** Sec. 29.1534, Education Code requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop strategies regarding methods to increase community awareness of prekindergarten programs through programs that provide information relating to public assistance. The agency may develop outreach materials for use by school districts to increase community awareness of prekindergarten programs.
- A school district must report annually to TEA the strategies implemented by the school district to increase community awareness of prekindergarten programs. TEA must post each report on the agency's website. The reporting requirement for school districts will expire September 1, 2013.
- TEA must provide information to school districts regarding effective methods to communicate to the parent of an eligible child about the availability of prekindergarten programs.
- DIGEST:** HB 1834 would repeal sec. 29.1534, Education Code, requiring reporting on strategies to increase community awareness of prekindergarten programs.

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, 2011.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1834 would remove an unnecessary reporting requirement that is a burden to both school districts and the TEA. The current requirement is duplicative of sec. 29.153(e), Education Code, which requires school districts to develop a system to notify parents about available prekindergarten programs. This notification adequately raises awareness in communities as shown by the high enrollment in prekindergarten classes.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Prekindergarten awareness efforts should be reported to the TEA because prekindergarten is so crucial. Any opportunity to assess school district efforts to increase awareness is valuable.