

SUBJECT: Establishing the Texas community school grant program

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Aycock, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Galindo, González,  
K. King

0 nays

3 absent — Allen, Huberty, VanDeaver

WITNESSES: For — Allen Weeks, Austin Voices for Education and Youth/Save Texas Schools; Donna Hagey, The Austin Project; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ann Teich, Austin ISD; Chandra Villanueva, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Annie Spilman, National Federation of Independent Business-Texas; Ted Melina Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Nelson Salinas, Texas Association of Business; Jesse Romero, Texas Association for Bilingual Education; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Janna Lilly, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Bee Moorhead, Texas Impact; Yannis Banks, Texas NAACP; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Colby Nichols, Texas Rural Education Association; Maria Whitsett, Texas School Alliance; Ed Martin, Texas State Teachers Association; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Monty Exter, The Association of Texas Professional Educators; Grover Campbell, Texas Association of School Boards; Casey Smith, United Ways of Texas; Susan Moffat; Kristi Morrison)

Against — None

On — Steve Swanson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mark Baxter, Texas Education Agency)

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 11.251 establishes a planning and decision-making process for district and campus improvement plans that involves district staff, parents, and community members.

Some public schools have collaborated with community organizations to provide services that help students and their families overcome barriers to learning. Some say the community school model works best when there is a position specifically dedicated to coordinating the partners and services, particularly in the initial years of developing a community school.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 1892 would create the Texas Community School Grant Program to assist schools in developing plans to transition into community schools.

**Grants.** The Texas Education Agency (TEA) would administer two-year grants to eligible schools from funds appropriated for that purpose. Each grant could not exceed \$60,000 per academic year to pay the salary and benefits of a full-time community school coordinator and \$25,000 per academic year to develop and implement a community school plan. A grant could be extended for an additional year.

TEA would set aside at least 10 percent of grant program funds to contract with at least one public or private entity that had experience in developing and implementing a community school plan to act as a technical assistance provider.

**Definitions.** The bill would define “community-based organization” as a nonprofit corporation or association located in close proximity to the population it serves. “Texas community school” would be defined as a public elementary, middle, junior high, or high school that partners with one or more community-based organizations to coordinate academic, social, and health services to reduce barriers to learning and improve the quality of education.

**Eligibility.** A school would demonstrate eligibility for the grant program by establishing a school community partnership team and a partnership with a lead community-based organization such as Communities in

Schools, a social service provider, or an education or youth services organization with experience in developing and implementing a community school plan. A school also would have to develop and implement a plan for sustaining the community school plan beyond the end of the grant period.

Before implementation, a community school plan would have to satisfy the requirements for a campus improvement plan and be approved by at least 75 percent of campus faculty and staff and 75 percent of parents.

**Coordinator's duties.** A community school coordinator employed using grant funds must have relevant experience. The coordinator's duties would include:

- recruiting community partners and building community support;
- coordinating planning, training, and evaluation efforts between the school and community partners;
- coordinating academic and student and family support programs;
- coordinating after-school, summer, and enrichment programs;
- encouraging community and parent engagement;
- conducting an annual needs assessment; and
- developing a plan for sustaining the community school beyond the grant period.

**Low-performing schools.** A school's community partnership team would function as the campus intervention team under interventions and sanctions requirements for certain low-performing schools.

**Oversight.** TEA would be required to establish benchmarks and performance measures for determining whether a school awarded a grant had improved since transitioning into a community school. A school determined by TEA to have not made satisfactory progress could continue to receive grant funds only if the school amended its plan to address deficiencies and demonstrated strong community support.

TEA would be required to establish the grant program by November 1,

2015.

This 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, 2015.

**NOTES:**

The Legislative Budget Board estimates CSHB 1892 would have a negative impact of \$7.2 million on general revenue related funds for fiscal 2016-17.