

- SUBJECT:** Using funds for children at high risk of violence on walk to school
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Gooden, K. King, Koop, Meyer, VanDeaver
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Dutton
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 8 — 22-9 (Bettencourt, Birdwell, Burton, Creighton, Hancock, Kolkhorst, Nelson, Schwertner, V. Taylor)
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mark Wiggins, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Chris Masey, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Sebastien Laroche, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Ted Melina Raab and Dwight Harris Texas AFT (American Federation of Teachers); Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Michelle Smith, Texas Association of School Business Officials; David Hinojosa, Texas Latino Education Coalition; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Colby Nichols, Texas Rural Education Association, Texas Association of Community Schools; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Leonardo Lopez, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 42.155(d) allows districts or counties to apply to the commissioner of education for an additional amount of up to 10 percent of its transportation allotment to use for the transportation of children who live within two miles of the school if walking would subject them to hazardous traffic conditions.

Observers have noted that some children are at risk of violence as well as traffic hazards on their walk to school.

DIGEST:

SB 195 would expand the purposes for which funds may be used under Education Code, sec. 42.155(d) to include the transportation of children who live within two miles of the school if the children would be at a high risk of violence walking to school. An area would be considered to present a high risk of violence if law enforcement records indicated a high incidence of violent crimes in the area.

The bill would require that applications requesting funds for an area presenting a high risk of violence include consolidated law enforcement records that document violent crimes in the area identified by local reporting agencies.

Districts or counties could use the funds to support community walking transportation programs, including walking school bus programs, provided that each supported program was required to submit a financial report each semester detailing the services provided by the program for the benefit of the district or county.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.