

SUBJECT: Requiring school district cybersecurity policies; designating coordinator

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 12 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allison, Ashby, K. Bell, Dutton, M.  
González, K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver

1 nay — Allen

0 absent

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 26 — 30-0, on Local and Uncontested calendar

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: John Grey, Texas School Alliance)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Christopher Jones, Texas Education Agency)

DIGEST: CSSB 820 would require each school district to adopt a cybersecurity policy to secure district cyberinfrastructure against cyber attacks and other cybersecurity incidents and determine cybersecurity risk and implement mitigation planning.

A district's policy could not conflict with the information security standards for institutions of higher education adopted by the Department of Information Resources under state laws governing information resources and the Texas computer network security system.

The superintendent of each school district would have to designate a cybersecurity coordinator to serve as a liaison between the district and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The coordinator would have to report to TEA any cyber attack or other cybersecurity incident against the district's cyberinfrastructure that constituted a breach of system security as soon as

practicable after the attack or incident was discovered.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSSB 820 would assist school districts in developing a cybersecurity foundation. School district systems contain valuable student and employee data that are targets for cyber criminals, including personally identifiable information, grades and attendance records, and salary information.

The bill would implement selected recommendations from the Data Security Advisory Committee that could be implemented with little to no cost while still helping to keep sensitive data safe from cyber attacks. The committee consists of members from various independent school districts and the Texas Education Agency and provides guidance to education communities on information security issues and resources. The bill also would not specify a time frame for adoption of the cybersecurity policy or designation of the cybersecurity coordinator to avoid increasing cost burdens to school districts in implementation.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

CSSB 820 could result in an unfunded mandate to school districts, especially those that would have to hire additional personnel to comply with the bill's requirements, increasing burdens and costs.