

SUBJECT: Requiring TEA to establish a bullying prevention pilot program

COMMITTEE: Youth Health & Safety, Select — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — S. Thompson, Hull, Allison, Capriglione, A. Johnson, T. King
0 nays
3 absent — Dutton, Landgraf, Lozano

WITNESSES: For — Maurine Molak, David’s Legacy Foundation (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tricia Cave, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Jacquie Benestante, Autism Society of Texas; Julia Grizzard, Bexar County Education Coalition; Ana O’Quin, Girls Empowerment Network; Paige Duggins-Clay, IDRA; Eric Knustrom, Learning.com; Lesley Rivas, Mexican American School Boards Association; Hannah Gill, NAMI Texas; Shannon Doyle, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Jennifer Rodriguez, North Texas Commission; Chelsea Biggerstaff, Elizabeth Henry, RecoveryPeople; Colby Nichols, TASA; Adriana Kohler, Texans Care for Children; Kelsey Kling, Texas AFT; Colby Nichols, Texas Association of Community Schools; Jeffrey Foley, Texas Association of School Resource Officers; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Leela Rice, Texas Council of Community Centers; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent; Suzi Kennon, Texas PTA; Elaina Fowler, Texas State Teachers Association; Tiffany Patterson, United Ways of Texas; Eve Margolis; Thomas Parkinson; Susan Stewart)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin, TEA; Hank Weikert, Texas Education Agency; Tiffanie Harrison)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that providing public schools with targeted

resources to prevent bullying could create safer and more supportive learning environments.

DIGEST:

CSHB 4845 would require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop a bullying prevention pilot program to reduce incidents of bullying in public schools and to award grants to eligible school districts to implement the pilot program. In developing the program, TEA would be required to use research-based best practices for bullying prevention and collaborate with qualified experts and researchers with experience in child and youth psychology, mental health, and education.

The commissioner of TEA would be required to award grants from funds appropriated for that purpose to school districts that demonstrated a need for the program. CSHB 4845 would require the commissioner of TEA to establish application criteria for a school district to apply for a grant and determine allowable uses of the grant funds.

CSHB 4845 would require a school district awarded a grant to implement the pilot program at no more than three campuses. TEA would be required to use funds appropriated for the pilot program to provide technical assistance to grant recipients.

The commissioner could use funds otherwise available and could solicit or accept grants or donations to implement the bill's provisions. CSHB 4845 would require the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's provisions. The commissioner would not be required to develop the pilot program unless funds were specifically appropriated for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to estimates by the Legislative Budget Board, CSHB 4845 would have a negative impact of \$4,016,000 in general revenue related funds through fiscal 2024-25.