

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 1561
By: Barrientos
Education
4/23/1999
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

Currently, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) accountability standards and ratings use an annual, rather than a longitudinal; dropout rate because Texas law requires them to calculate the longitudinal rate of dropouts between grades seven and twelve. This provides a deceptively low longitudinal rate and prevents a longitudinal rate from measuring a high school campus. The TEA rating system requires an "exemplary" school to have a 1 percent dropout rate, translating to a longitudinal dropout rate of 5 percent. "Acceptable" schools have dropout rates of below 6 percent, translating into a longitudinal rate of over 30 percent. This bill would restore the repealed 5 percent longitudinal dropout rate goal, establish the 2004 - 2005 school year as the target year to reach the goal, define annual and longitudinal dropout rates as to allow high school campuses to be measured with longitudinal rates, and require the commissioner of education to increase the standards for rating a school's dropout rate in order to achieve the 5 percent goal.

PURPOSE

As proposed, C.S.S.B. 1561 sets a five percent dropout rate goal for the 2004 - 2005 school year, defines annual and longitudinal dropout rates, and requires the commissioner of education to increase the standards for rating a school's dropout rate in order to achieve the five percent goal.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 5.001, Education Code, to define "annual event dropout rate," "dropout," and "longitudinal dropout rate." Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 39.051, Education Code, by adding Subsection (g), to prohibit a campus or district having an annual event dropout rate of five percent or less from being rated acceptable, beginning with the 2000 - 2001 school year. Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to report to the legislature in January, 2001 with a plan to incrementally decrease the annual event dropout rate so that an acceptable rating may be set by a school year stated in that plan which provides a campus and district longitudinal dropout rate of five percent.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 39.182(a), Education Code, to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to deliver a report containing: a statement of the annual event dropout rate of students in grade levels 9 through 12, expressed in the aggregate and disaggregated by sex and by the number of students who have also been retained at a grade level; a statement of the projected cross-sectional and longitudinal dropout rate for certain grades based on the most recent annual event dropout rate; and a description of a measurable systematic plan for reducing certain dropout rates beginning with the 2004 - 2005 school year, rather than the 1997 - 1998 school year.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 42.152, Education Code, by adding Subsections (s) and (t), to require the commissioner to withhold \$250,000 or a greater amount as determined in the General Appropriations Act each fiscal year from funds appropriated for allotments under this section, and distribute \$10,000 or a greater amount to each of the 20 high school campuses that achieved the greatest annual reduction in the longitudinal dropout rate for the preceding school year and \$50,000 or a greater amount among other districts selected by the commissioner according to certain guidelines. Requires the commissioner to reduce each district's allotments in the manner described under Section 42.253, after deducting the amount withheld under Subsection (s) from the total amount appropriated for the allotment under Subsection (a).

SECTION 5. Amends Section 29.081, Education Code, by adding Subsections (j) and (k), to require a school district to determine and document the educational status of each student who did not graduate and does not resume attendance in school in the district, and who has 10 or more unexcused absences. Requires a school district to take steps to encourage or require students identified in Subsection (j) to return to school.

SECTION 6. Effective date: September 1, 1999.

SECTION 7. Emergency clause.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

SECTION 2.

Amends Section 39.051, Education Code, by adding Subsection (g), to prohibit a campus or district having an annual event dropout rate of five percent or less, from being rated acceptable. Requires the commissioner to report to the legislature in January, 2001 with a plan to incrementally decrease the annual event dropout rate. Deletes proposed SECTION 2.

SECTION 5.

Amends Section 29.081, Education Code, by adding Subsections (j) and (k), to require a school district to determine and document the educational status of each student who did not graduate and does not resume attendance in school in the district, and who has 10 or more unexcused absences. Requires a school district to take steps to encourage or require such students to return to school.