

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 976
By: Shapiro
Education
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

According to the Texas Education Agency, 23,457 students dropped out of public school in the 1999-2000 school year and other studies indicate the actual number may be much higher. Students most likely to drop out of school are those with poor attendance, those who must work, those who are older than the majority of their classmates, and those who fall behind in class credits in high school. As proposed, S.B. 976 establishes a Middle College Education Pilot Program for students at-risk of dropping out; provides at-risk students with services such as flexible scheduling and mentor programs; requires schools to review data related to dropout prevention and incorporate the information in district and campus improvement plans; and allow the commissioner of education to impose sanctions on districts that have been rated as academically unacceptable due to high dropout rates.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 (Section 29.908(c), Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 11F, Education Code, by adding Section 11.255, as follows:

Sec. 11.255. DROPOUT PREVENTION REVIEW. (a) Requires each district-level planning and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee for a junior, middle, or high school campus to analyze information related to dropout prevention, including certain factors.

(b) Requires each district-level and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee to use the information reviewed under this section while developing district or campus improvement plans under this subchapter.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 29Z, Education Code, by adding Section 29.908, as follows:

Sec. 29.908. MIDDLE COLLEGE EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish and administer a middle college education pilot program for students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who wish to accelerate high school completion. Provides that for the purposes of this section, "student at risk of dropping out of school" has the meaning assigned by Section 29.081.

(b) Requires the program to meet certain requirements.

(c) Provides that in accordance with the rules adopted by the commissioner, the student participating in the program is entitled to the benefits of the Foundation School Program in proportion to the amount of time spent by the student on high school courses. Authorizes the commissioner to accept gifts, grants, and donations to pay program costs not covered by the student's Foundation School Program benefits.

(d) Requires the commissioner to consult the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) while establishing and administering the program.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 39.131(a), Education Code, to require the commissioner, to the extent deemed necessary, to take certain actions listed in order of severity, if a district fails to meet the accreditation criteria, including imposing certain sanctions on a district which has been rated as academically unacceptable for a period of one year or more due to the district's dropout rates.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.

SECTIONS 1 and 3: upon passage and beginning with the 2003-2004 school year.