

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 300
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Many independent school districts across Texas are reporting severe financial difficulties due to several factors, including the requirement to fulfill unfunded mandates. These mandates are particularly burdensome to fast-growth school districts. In a difficult economic climate and with dwindling resources, districts are forced to fulfill unnecessary mandates rather than focus on their basic mission, which is to educate students.

As proposed, S.B. 300 authorizes, rather than requires, a school district to conduct school bus evacuation training, establish a goal to reduce the consumption of electric energy, and use of energy efficient light bulbs. S.B. 300 also prohibits a school district from enrolling at a campus more than a campus-wide average of 22 students per kindergarten, first, second, third, and fourth grade class. Finally, S.B. 300 expands the exemption from certain requirements and prohibitions imposed by the Education Code to include recognized districts.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 25.112(a), Education Code, to prohibit a school district from enrolling at a campus more than a campus-wide average of 22 students in kindergarten, first, second, third and fourth grade classes, rather than more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third or fourth grade class.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 34.0021(a), Education Code, to authorize, rather than require, each school district to conduct a training session for students and teachers concerning procedures for evacuating a school bus during an emergency, pursuant to the safety standards established by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) under Section 34.002 (Safety Standards).

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 39.112(a) and (d), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that, except as provided by Subsection (b), a school campus or district that is rated as recognized or exemplary is exempt from requirements and prohibitions imposed and rules adopted under this code.

(d) Authorizes the commissioner of education to exempt a school campus that is rated as recognized or exemplary, rather than an exemplary school campus, from elementary class size limits under this section if the school campus submits to the commissioner a written plan showing steps that will be taken to ensure that the exemption from the class size limits will not be harmful to the academic achievement of the students on the school campus.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 44.902, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 44.902. GOAL TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRIC ENERGY. Authorizes, rather than requires, the board of trustees of a school district to establish a goal to reduce the school district's annual electric consumption by five percent each state fiscal year for six years beginning September 1, 2007.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 44.903(b), Education Code, to provide that a school district is encouraged to, rather than required to, purchase for use in each type of light fixture in an instructional facility a certain type of commercially available model of light bulb.

SECTION 6. Repealer: Section 34.0021(b) (regarding the requirement of a school district to conduct the school bus emergency evacuation training twice a year), Education Code.

Repealer: Section 34.0021(d) (regarding the requirement of a school district to provide DPS with a record certifying completion of school bus evacuation training), Education Code.

Repealer: Section 44.901(b) (regarding the requirement of the board of trustees to establish a goal to reduce electric consumption by five percent each year for six years), Education Code.

SECTION 7. Makes application of this Act prospective beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

SECTION 8. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.