

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 490
By: Lucio
Education
6/13/2017
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Data collected via the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) is regularly used by the legislature to inform policymaking related to public schools. However, PEIMS and related reports do not currently include data on the number of school counselors in our districts, making it difficult for lawmakers to make informed policy decisions related to these important staff members. It also reduces transparency, depriving parents of access to meaningful information about the public school system.

S.B. 490 simply adds reporting of the number of counselors to the information school districts already submit to the Texas Education Agency through PEIMS, and adds counselors to a campus-level report that districts already prepare. Documenting the presence of school counselors in public schools will ensure that future policy proposals are informed by current data and are better designed to positively impact Texas students. Increased transparency will enable parents to more effectively advocate for their children and make choices regarding their public education. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 490 amends current law relating to school counselors in public schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 3 (Section 42.006, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 33.007, Education Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (b-1), as follows:

(b) Requires a school counselor, during the first school year a student is enrolled in a high school or at the high school level in an open-enrollment charter school, and again during each year of a student's enrollment in high school or at the high school level, to provide information about postsecondary education to the student and the student's parent or guardian. Requires that the information include information regarding, among other topics, the availability of education and training vouchers and tuition and fee waivers to attend an institution of higher education as provided by Section 54.366 (Exemptions for Students Under Conservatorship of Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)) for a student who is or was previously in the conservatorship of DFPS.

(b-1) Requires the school counselor, when providing information under Subsection (b)(10) (relating to requiring a school counselor to provide certain information regarding higher education to a student or student's parent or guardian), to report to the student and the student's parent or guardian the number of times the counselor has provided the information to the student.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 39.306, Education Code, by adding Subsection (d-1), to require that the annual report describing the educational performance of the district and of each campus in the district also include the number of school counselors providing counseling services at each campus.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 42.006, Education Code, by adding Subsection (a-2), as follows:

(a-2) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner), by rule, to require each school district and open-enrollment charter school to report through the Public Education Information Management System information regarding the availability of school counselors at each campus. Requires that the commissioner's rules require a district or school to report the number of full-time equivalent school counselors providing counseling services at a campus. Defines "full-time equivalent school counselor." Requires the Texas Education Agency to maintain the information provided in accordance with this subsection.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.