

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
86R10637 JES-D

S.B. 1453  
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Education  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Many school districts require students to purchase expensive graphing calculators for middle and high school math courses and standardized tests, while low- and no-cost digital calculator applications with the same functionality are available

While the STAAR calculator policy does not prevent the use of secure calculator applications, schools and districts are not always certain what is or is not allowed.

Our districts have already spent over \$5 million on calculators this biennium—money that could have been spent on instructional materials, blended learning opportunities or technology improvements. Before spending taxpayer dollars on handheld calculating devices or requiring parents to shell out a hefty sum—often over \$100—districts should look to high-quality, no-cost calculator applications.

S.B. 1453 requires school districts to permit students enrolled in courses that require the use of a handheld graphing calculator to use a calculator application that provides the same functionality, unless the district makes available to the student a graphing calculator at no cost to the student.

S.B. 1453 will also require the Texas Education Agency to conduct an evaluation of best practices on calculating devices on standardized tests, update the related policy, and maintain and post an approved list of calculating devices and applications, with information on cost and functionality.

As proposed, S.B. 1453 amends current law relating to the use of cellular telephone applications in place of graphing calculators in public schools.

### **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 Subchapter Z, Chapter 25, Education Code, by adding Section 25.904, as follows:

Sec. 25.904. USE OF CELLULAR TELEPHONE APPLICATION IN PLACE OF GRAPHING CALCULATOR. (a) Requires a school district to permit a student enrolled in a course that requires the student to use a graphing calculator to instead use an application on the student's cellular telephone that provides the same functionality, unless the district makes available to the student a graphing calculator at no cost to the student.

(b) Authorizes a school district to adopt policies related to student use of cellular telephones under this section.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2019–2020 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.