

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1518
By: Dutton
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

School dropout rates affect the Texas economy and decrease not only the state's future tax revenues but also its ability to attract new business. Some believe that Texas' method of reporting dropouts has obscured the dropout problem, resulting in the loss of federal grants for certain school districts. House Bill 1518 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the accelerated instruction program and to include an analysis of the effectiveness of each program. The bill requires TEA to collect and report dropout and school completion data and requires a dropout data oversight committee to review TEA's standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing school. The bill requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to adopt rules under which the commissioner must grant a one-year exemption from audits related to state compensatory education to a school district that consistently achieves significant reductions in dropout rates, but prohibits the commissioner from granting an exemption to a district that does not make consistent significant progress in reducing its dropout rate.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 3 (Section 42.152, Education Code) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

House Bill 1518 amends the Education Code relating to the evaluation and documentation of the effectiveness of the accelerated instruction in reducing any disparity in performance or in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. The bill requires that the evaluation include an analysis of the effectiveness of each program described in the campus and district improvement plans for reducing these disparities. The bill requires the commissioner of education to ensure that each school district complies.

The bill sets forth provisions on the dropout data oversight committee (committee). The bill requires the committee to review the Texas Education Agency's (agency) standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing school before the agency implements the standards and definitions.

The bill requires the committee be composed of one member appointed by the governor, one member appointed by the speaker of the house, one member appointed by the lieutenant governor, one member of the Legislative Budget Board appointed jointly by the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house, and one employee of the office of the state auditor, appointed by the state auditor. The bill requires that a committee member appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, or speaker of the house represent the public and must have a demonstrated interest in dropout prevention and public education. The bill stipulates that the committee is subject to Chapter 2110, Government Code.

The bill requires the agency to organize and share the information it collects during its evaluation with local districts. The bill sets forth provisions if the agency cannot perform this evaluation with existing resources.

The bill requires the commissioner to adopt rules under which the commissioner must grant a one-year

exemption from the requirements relating to the reporting and auditing system for district and campus expenditures of compensatory education funds (Section 42.152, Subsection (q), Education Code) to a school district that consistently achieves significant reductions in the disparity in performance between students at risk of dropping out and all other students. The bill prohibits the commissioner from granting an exemption to a district that does not make consistent significant progress in reducing its dropout rate. The bill deletes current provisions relating to when the commissioner is required to grant this one-year exemption from the requirements.

This Act takes effect beginning with the 2003-2004 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2003.