

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1041
By: Parker
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 2008, 78 percent of clients of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc., were involved in sexual abuse cases. Ninety-eight percent of the victims served by a children's advocacy center last year knew their perpetrator. Prevention is the answer to this problem. Training more people to identify the signs of child sexual abuse and to prevent further child sexual abuse from occurring better equips Texas to tackle the problem. Teachers and school personnel, as well as parents, interact with our children daily in school districts throughout Texas. They should be equipped with all the latest tools and information necessary to combat this problem.

C.S.H.B. 1041 requires each school district to adopt and implement a policy addressing sexual abuse of children to be included in the district improvement plan. The bill requires the policy to focus on increasing teacher, student, and parent awareness of sexual abuse warning signs and assistance and intervention measures.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1041 amends the Education Code to require each school district to adopt and implement a policy addressing sexual abuse of children to be included in the district improvement plan. The bill requires such a policy to address methods for increasing teacher, student, and parent awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse, using resources developed by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse reporting and preventative training programs; actions that a child who is a victim of sexual abuse should take to obtain assistance and intervention; and available counseling options for students affected by sexual abuse.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1041 differs from the original by specifying that the methods addressed by a school district's sexual abuse policy for increasing teacher, student, and parent awareness of issues regarding child sexual abuse are to use resources developed by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse reporting and preventive training programs. The substitute removes a provision in the original requiring the adopted policy under these provisions to address methods for preventing sexual abuse of children.