

By: Hughes, et al.

S.B. No. 487

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the applicability of certain laws to open-enrollment charter schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 12.1058, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsections (d), (d-1), (d-2), (d-3), and (d-4) to read as follows:

(c) Notwithstanding Subsection (a) or (b), an open-enrollment charter school operated by a tax exempt entity as described by Section 12.101(a)(3) is not considered to be a political subdivision, local government, or local governmental entity unless:

(1) a ~~[the applicable]~~ statute specifically states that the statute applies to an open-enrollment charter school; or

(2) a provision in this chapter states that a specific statute applies to an open-enrollment charter school.

(d) A political subdivision shall consider an open-enrollment charter school a school district for purposes of zoning, project permitting, platting and replatting processes, business licensing, franchises, utility services, signage, subdivision regulation, property development projects, the requirements for posting bonds or securities, contract requirements, land development standards as provided by Section 212.902, Local Government Code, tree and vegetation regulations,

1 regulations of architectural features of a structure, construction  
2 of fences, landscaping, garbage disposal, noise levels, fees or  
3 other assessments, and construction or site development work. An  
4 open-enrollment charter school does not have the power of eminent  
5 domain.

6 (d-1) A political subdivision may not take any action that  
7 prohibits an open-enrollment charter school from operating a public  
8 school campus, educational support facility, athletic facility, or  
9 administrative office within the political subdivision's  
10 jurisdiction or on any specific property located within the  
11 jurisdiction of the political subdivision that it could not take  
12 against a school district. A political subdivision shall grant  
13 approval in the same manner and follow the same timelines as if the  
14 charter school were a school district located in that political  
15 subdivision's jurisdiction.

16 (d-2) This section applies to both owned and leased property  
17 of the open-enrollment charter school under Section 12.128.

18 (d-3) Except as provided by this section, this section does  
19 not affect the authority granted by state law to a political  
20 subdivision to regulate an open-enrollment charter school  
21 regarding health and safety ordinances.

22 (d-4) In this section, "political subdivision" does not  
23 include a school district.

24 SECTION 2. Section 212.902, Local Government Code, is  
25 amended to read as follows:

26 Sec. 212.902. SCHOOL DISTRICT AND OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER  
27 SCHOOL LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS. (a) This section applies to an

1 agreement [~~agreements~~] between a school district or  
2 open-enrollment charter school [~~districts~~] and a [~~any~~]  
3 municipality which has annexed territory for limited purposes.

4 (b) On request by a school district or open-enrollment  
5 charter school, a municipality shall enter an agreement with the  
6 board of trustees of the school district or the governing body of  
7 the open-enrollment charter school to establish review fees, review  
8 periods, and land development standards ordinances and to provide  
9 alternative water pollution control methodologies for school  
10 buildings constructed by the school district or open-enrollment  
11 charter school. The agreement shall include a provision exempting  
12 the district or charter school from all land development ordinances  
13 in cases where the district or charter school is adding temporary  
14 classroom buildings on an existing school campus.

15 (c) If the municipality and the school district or  
16 open-enrollment charter school do not reach an agreement on or  
17 before the 120th day after the date on which the municipality  
18 receives the district's or charter school's request for an  
19 agreement, proposed agreements by the [~~school~~] district or charter  
20 school and the municipality shall be submitted to an independent  
21 arbitrator appointed by the presiding district judge whose  
22 jurisdiction includes the [~~school~~] district or charter school. The  
23 arbitrator shall, after a hearing at which both the [~~school~~]  
24 district or charter school and the municipality make presentations  
25 on their proposed agreements, prepare an agreement resolving any  
26 differences between the proposals. The agreement prepared by the  
27 arbitrator will be final and binding upon both the [~~school~~]

1 district or charter school and the municipality. The cost of the  
2 arbitration proceeding shall be borne equally by the [~~school~~]  
3 district or charter school and the municipality.

4 (d) A school district or open-enrollment charter school  
5 that requests an agreement under this section, at the time the  
6 district or charter school [~~it~~] makes the request, shall send a copy  
7 of the request to the commissioner of education. At the end of the  
8 120-day period, the requesting district or charter school shall  
9 report to the commissioner the status or result of negotiations  
10 with the municipality. A municipality may send a separate status  
11 report to the commissioner. The district or charter school shall  
12 send to the commissioner a copy of each agreement between the  
13 district or charter school and a municipality under this section.

14 (e) In this section:

15 (1) [~~r~~] "Land [~~land~~] development standards" includes  
16 impervious cover limitations, building setbacks, floor to area  
17 ratios, building heights and coverage, water quality controls,  
18 landscaping, development setbacks, compatibility standards,  
19 traffic analyses, including traffic impact analyses, parking  
20 requirements, signage requirements, and driveway cuts, if  
21 applicable.

22 (2) "Open-enrollment charter school" means a school  
23 granted a charter under Subchapter C, D, or E, Chapter 12, Education  
24 Code.

25 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the  
26 applicability of or waive fees for fire, safety, health, or  
27 building code ordinances of the municipality prior to or during

1 construction of school buildings, nor shall any agreement waive any  
2 fee or modify any ordinance of a municipality for an  
3 administration, service, or athletic facility proposed for  
4 construction by a school district or open-enrollment charter  
5 school.

6 SECTION 3. Section 552.053(b), Local Government Code, is  
7 amended to read as follows:

8 (b) The following may be exempt:

- 9 (1) this state;  
10 (2) a county;  
11 (3) a municipality; or  
12 (4) [~~a~~] school districts and open-enrollment charter  
13 schools [~~district~~].

14 SECTION 4. Section 12.103(c), Education Code, is repealed.

15 SECTION 5. An exemption granted to a school district under  
16 Section 552.053(b)(4), Local Government Code, as that subdivision  
17 existed before the effective date of this Act, automatically  
18 extends to all open-enrollment charter schools located in the  
19 municipality after the effective date of this Act unless the  
20 municipality repeals the exemption before the effective date of  
21 this Act.

22 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
23 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
24 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
25 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
26 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.