

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 491
By: Shapleigh
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Although school-based mental health programs may reduce the risk of mental health illness, there is currently no requirement that any state agency undertake a study of Texas' schools capacity to identify and address mental health and substance abuse problems in students. As proposed, S.B. 491 requires the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Texas Department of Health, and the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse to conduct a joint assessment of existing school-based mental health and substance abuse programs and report the results of the assessment to the 79th Legislature. The assessment should include recommendations regarding further development of such programs in Texas schools.

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

Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), along with the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Texas Department of Health, and the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, to assess existing school-based mental health and substance abuse programs. Requires the assessment to include recommendations regarding further development of such programs, including recommendations regarding certain related topics. Requires TEA to report on the results of the assessment to the 79th Legislature by January 11, 2005.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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