

By: West

S.B. No. 257

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to accountability for public school dropouts and students at risk of dropping out of school.

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

SECTION 1. Section 29.081(c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Each school district shall evaluate and document the effectiveness of the accelerated instruction in reducing any disparity in performance on assessment instruments administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, or disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. The evaluation shall include an analysis of the effectiveness of each program described in the campus and district improvement plans for reducing the disparities described by this subsection. The commissioner shall ensure that each school district complies with this subsection.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 29.088 and 29.089 to read as follows:

Sec. 29.088. STUDENT DROPOUT INFORMATION. The agency shall collect data from school districts relating to dropout and school completion rates using the dropout definitions and data standards adopted by the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Sec. 29.089. DROPOUT DATA OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. (a) The

1 dropout data oversight committee shall review the agency's  
2 standards and definitions for dropouts and students completing  
3 school before the agency implements the standards and definitions.

4 The committee shall be composed of:

5 (1) one member appointed by the governor;

6 (2) one member appointed by the speaker of the house;

7 (3) one member appointed by the lieutenant governor;

8 (4) one member of the Legislative Budget Board,  
9 appointed jointly by the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the  
10 house; and

11 (5) one employee of the office of the state auditor,  
12 appointed by the state auditor.

13 (b) A committee member appointed by the governor,  
14 lieutenant governor, or speaker of the house shall represent the  
15 public and must have a demonstrated interest in dropout prevention  
16 and public education.

17 (c) The committee is subject to Chapter 2110, Government  
18 Code.

19 SECTION 3. Sections 42.152(d) and (r), Education Code, are  
20 amended to read as follows:

21 (d) The agency shall systematically evaluate the  
22 effectiveness of accelerated instruction and support programs  
23 provided under Section 29.081 for students at risk of dropping out  
24 of school. The agency shall organize and share the information it  
25 collects during its evaluation with local districts. If the agency  
26 cannot perform this evaluation with existing resources, the  
27 commissioner shall:

1           (1) withhold from the total amount appropriated for  
2 allotments under this section an amount the commissioner determines  
3 is necessary to perform the evaluation; and

4           (2) reduce each district's tier one allotments in the  
5 manner described for a reduction in allotments under Section  
6 42.253.

7           (r) The commissioner shall adopt rules under which the  
8 commissioner must grant a one-year exemption from the requirements  
9 of Subsection (q) [~~(g)~~] to a school district that consistently  
10 achieves significant reductions in the disparity in performance  
11 between students described by Section 29.081(d) and all other  
12 students. The commissioner may not grant an exemption to a district  
13 that does not make consistent significant progress in reducing its  
14 dropout rate [in which the group of students who have failed to  
15 perform satisfactorily in the preceding school year on an  
16 assessment instrument required under Section 39.023(a), (c), or (l)  
17 subsequently performs on those assessment instruments at a level  
18 that meets or exceeds a level prescribed by commissioner rule].  
19 Each year the commissioner, based on the most recent information  
20 available, shall determine if a school district is entitled to an  
21 exemption for the following school year and notify the district and  
22 the district's board of trustees of that determination.

23           SECTION 4. (a) This Act takes effect beginning with the  
24 2003-2004 school year.

25           (b) As soon as practicable on or after the effective date of  
26 this Act, as provided by Section 29.089, Education Code, as added by  
27 this Act:

1           (1) the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of  
2 the house shall each appoint a person to the dropout data oversight  
3 committee;

4           (2) the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the  
5 house shall appoint a member of the Legislative Budget Board to the  
6 dropout data oversight committee; and

7           (3) the state auditor shall appoint an employee of the  
8 office of the state auditor to the dropout data oversight  
9 committee.

10           SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.