

By: Shapiro

S.B. No. 976

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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AN ACT

relating to high school completion and the creation of a middle college education pilot program.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter F, Chapter 11, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 11.255 to read as follows:

Sec. 11.255. DROPOUT PREVENTION REVIEW. (a) Each district-level planning and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee for a junior, middle, or high school campus shall analyze information related to dropout prevention, including:

(1) the results of the audit of dropout records required by Section 39.055;

(2) campus information related to graduation rates, dropout rates, high school equivalency certificate rates, and the percentage of students who remain in high school more than four years after entering grade level 9;

(3) the number of students who enter a high school equivalency certificate program and:

(A) do not complete the program;

(B) complete the program but do not take the high school equivalency examination; or

(C) complete the program and take the high school equivalency examination but do not obtain a high school equivalency

1 certificate;

2 (4) for students enrolled in grade levels 9 and 10,
3 information related to academic credit hours earned, retention
4 rates, and placements in alternative education programs and
5 expulsions under Chapter 37; and

6 (5) the results of an evaluation of each school-based
7 dropout prevention program in the district.

8 (b) Each district-level planning and decision-making
9 committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making
10 committee shall use the information reviewed under this section in
11 developing district or campus improvement plans under this
12 subchapter.

13 SECTION 2. Subchapter Z, Chapter 29, Education Code, is
14 amended by adding Section 29.908 to read as follows:

15 Sec. 29.908. MIDDLE COLLEGE EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM.

16 (a) The commissioner shall establish and administer a middle
17 college education pilot program for students who are at risk of
18 dropping out of school. For purposes of this section, "student at
19 risk of dropping out of school" has the meaning assigned by Section
20 29.081.

21 (b) The program must:

22 (1) provide for a course of study that enables a
23 participating student to combine high school courses and
24 college-level courses during grade levels 11 and 12;

25 (2) allow a participating student to complete high
26 school and receive at least a high school diploma and associate
27 degree at the time of graduation;

1 (3) include articulation agreements under Subchapter
2 T, Chapter 61, with colleges, universities, and technical schools
3 in this state to provide a participating student access to
4 postsecondary educational and training opportunities; and

5 (4) provide a participating student flexibility in
6 class scheduling and academic mentoring.

7 (c) A student participating in the program is entitled to
8 the benefits of the Foundation School Program in proportion to the
9 amount of time spent by the student on high school courses, in
10 accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner. The
11 commissioner may accept gifts, grants, and donations from any
12 source, including private and nonprofit organizations, to pay any
13 costs of the program not covered by the student's Foundation School
14 Program benefits.

15 (d) The commissioner shall consult the Texas Higher
16 Education Coordinating Board in establishing and administering the
17 program.

18 SECTION 3. Subsection (a), Section 39.131, Education Code,
19 is amended to read as follows:

20 (a) If a district does not satisfy the accreditation
21 criteria, the commissioner shall take any of the following actions,
22 listed in order of severity, to the extent the commissioner
23 determines necessary:

24 (1) issue public notice of the deficiency to the board
25 of trustees;

26 (2) order a hearing conducted by the board of trustees
27 of the district for the purpose of notifying the public of the

1 unacceptable performance, the improvements in performance expected
2 by the agency, and the sanctions that may be imposed under this
3 section if the performance does not improve;

4 (3) order the preparation of a student achievement
5 improvement plan that addresses each academic excellence indicator
6 for which the district's performance is unacceptable, the
7 submission of the plan to the commissioner for approval, and
8 implementation of the plan;

9 (4) order a hearing to be held before the commissioner
10 or the commissioner's designee at which the president of the board
11 of trustees of the district and the superintendent shall appear and
12 explain the district's low performance, lack of improvement, and
13 plans for improvement;

14 (5) arrange an on-site investigation of the district;

15 (6) appoint an agency monitor to participate in and
16 report to the agency on the activities of the board of trustees or
17 the superintendent;

18 (7) appoint a master to oversee the operations of the
19 district;

20 (8) appoint a management team to direct the operations
21 of the district in areas of unacceptable performance or require the
22 district to obtain certain services under a contract with another
23 person;

24 (9) if a district has been rated as academically
25 unacceptable for a period of one year or more, appoint a board of
26 managers to exercise the powers and duties of the board of trustees;

27 [~~or~~]

1 (10) if a district has been rated as academically
2 unacceptable for a period of two years or more:

3 (A) annex the district to one or more adjoining
4 districts under Section 13.054; or

5 (B) in the case of a home-rule school district or
6 open-enrollment charter school, order closure of all programs
7 operated under the district's or school's charter; or

8 (11) if a district has been rated as academically
9 unacceptable for a period of two years or more due to the district's
10 dropout rates, impose sanctions designed to improve high school
11 completion rates, including:

12 (A) ordering the development of a dropout
13 prevention plan for approval by the commissioner;

14 (B) restructuring the district or appropriate
15 school campuses to improve identification of and service to
16 students who are at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by
17 Section 29.081;

18 (C) ordering lower student-to-counselor ratios
19 on school campuses with high dropout rates; and

20 (D) ordering the use of any other intervention
21 strategy effective in reducing dropout rates, including mentor
22 programs and flexible class scheduling.

23 SECTION 4. (a) This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

24 (b) Sections 1 and 3 of this Act apply beginning with the
25 2004-2005 school year.