

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R2415 SLO-D

S.B. 207
By: Lucio
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Research indicates that test scores are significantly higher for students in grade 3 and 4 who attend schools that fully implement the Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program, and that students in grades 6 through 8 who are at risk of dropping out and receive both counseling and tutoring improve significantly in achievement, classroom behavior, and self-esteem when compared to students who only receive tutoring services.

Counselors help to improve student access and enhance the ability of schools to meet performance standards by counseling individuals and small groups of students to meet identified needs. Counselors also provide training for school personnel; consult with parents, teachers, and other staff to address students' needs; and coordinate people and resources in the community to benefit students. Counselors also interpret assessment instruments to assist teachers with appropriate instruction to promote achievement and advise students on postsecondary opportunities and career options.

As proposed, S.B. 207 requires school boards to determine the percentage of total work time that school counselors' should spend on activities that fall outside developmental guidance and counseling. The purpose of this bill is to promote student performance and increase high school completion rates.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 (Section 39.074, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 33.006, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c), to require the board of trustees of each school district, in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner of education (commissioner), to adopt a policy that establishes the percentage of total work time a counselor is expected to spend on the components of a counseling or guidance program developed under Section 33.005 (Developmental Guidance And Counseling). Provides that the time spent in administering assessment instruments or providing other assistance in connection with assessment instruments, except time spent in interpreting data from assessment instruments, is not considered time spent on counseling or guidance. Requires each school in the district to implement the policy. Requires a copy of the policy to be maintained in the office of each school in the district and made available on request during regular school hours to district employees, parents of district students, and the public.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 39.074, Education Code, by adding Subsection (g), to require the commissioner to request that the district scheduled for the investigation assess the district's compliance with the policy adopted under Section 33.006(c) and provide a written copy of the assessment to the investigators on or before the date specified by the commissioner. Requires the investigator, as part of each investigation, to interview a percentage of district counselors determined by the commissioner to assess the district's compliance with the policy adopted under Section 33.006(c). Requires the commissioner to adopt rules to implement this subsection.

SECTION 3. (a) Requires each school district to implement a policy adopted under Section 33.006(c), Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

(b) Makes application of Section 39.074(g), Education Code, as added by this Act, prospective to the 2006-2007 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.