

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R5181 SLO-F

S.B. 656
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Education
3/4/2005
As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, the Texas Education Code is silent as to the maximum number of hours and/or meetings a school district can require of Texas teachers. Unfortunately, the number of after-school meetings and overall hours Texas school teachers are required to be at school has been increasing over time. It has become more of a standard that a teacher is at school until early or late evenings. Although some of the evening work is elective, many late evenings are a result of expectations of the principal and/or district that the teacher attend meetings that are scheduled for the end of the school day on which they are called. Many teachers find themselves at after-school meetings several days each week thus preventing them from lesson planning, grading, or simply leaving school at a reasonable hour to be with their families and/or tend to personal business.

As proposed, S.B. 656 provides districts with a parameter as to when a reasonable work day for teachers should end while continuing to provide flexibility for administrators to call weekly meetings necessary to meet campus/district objectives, as well as any additional meetings that meet the definition of an emergency as determined by the commissioner of education. S.B. 656 also provides teachers with the opportunity to meet by department or grade level to plan and collaborate on educational activities for students. Currently, there is also no law that provides for collaborative planning periods and practice varies among districts and campuses. S.B. 656 provides a structure that would encourage collaboration among teachers of the same subject and/or grade level and provides students with an aligned curriculum that would support their academic success.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 21.4011, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter I, Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Section 21.4011, as follows:

Sec. 21.4011. MAXIMUM WORKDAY; MEETINGS. (a) Prohibits a workday for a classroom teacher from being more than 30 minutes longer than the instructional day.

(b) Requires a classroom teacher, except in the case of an emergency, to be given at least 24 hours' notice of any meeting that is held outside of the teacher's regular workday as provided under Subsection (a). Requires the commissioner of education by rule to define an emergency for purposes of this subsection.

(c) Prohibits a classroom teacher, notwithstanding any other provision of this code, from being required to attend more than one meeting each week that is held outside of the teacher's regular workday as provided under Subsection (a).

SECTION 2. Amends Section 21.404, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 21.404. PLANNING AND PREPARATION TIME. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text.

(b) Requires each school district to schedule at least one two-hour period each month during the regular workday for teachers to plan and collaborate with other teachers who teach the same subject or grade level.

(c) Requires each school district and school, to allow teachers additional preparation and planning time, to establish a volunteer program under which volunteers perform most routine nonteaching duties, including performing clerical duties, monitoring students in the cafeteria, and performing routine before-school and after-school duties such as monitoring students at bus stops.

SECTION 3. Makes application of this Act prospective to the 2005-2006 school year.

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