

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1609
By: Crownover
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Communities In Schools (CIS) is the largest dropout prevention program in Texas. The 27 local CIS programs are 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations established to support schools by working with at-risk students in order to decrease the dropout rate. During the 2005-06 school year, CIS served 75,974 students. CIS personnel work on school campuses to provide direct academic support to students and to allow teachers and administrators to focus on academic success.

This bill amends the Education Code to increase accountability of, and funding for, CIS programs in Texas. The bill will use Compensatory Education funds to expand services to more Texas children. The bill will ensure that state dollars are well-spent and will allow the Texas Education Agency to expand CIS programming in communities currently without a CIS program and to expand services offered in existing communities.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Commissioner of Education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

The bill amends the Section 33.154 of the Education Code to provide that duties assigned under that section in current law to the state director of the Communities in Schools program are to be performed by the Commissioner of Education (commissioner). New, or amended, duties to be performed by the Commissioner under the provisions of this bill are to:

- set standards for the Communities In Schools program and establish state performance goals, objectives, and measures for the program, including performance goals, objectives, and measures that consider improvement in student behavior, academic achievement, and promotion, graduation, retention, and dropout rates; and
- adopt policies concerning the responsibility of the agency in encouraging local businesses to participate in local Communities In Schools programs, the responsibility of the agency in obtaining information from participating school districts, the use of federal or state funds available to the agency for programs of this nature, and any other areas concerning the program identified by the commissioner. The bill provides that the commissioner shall adopt rules to implement such policies and shall annually update the rules.

The bill provides that if the commissioner determines that a program consistently fails to achieve the performance goals, objectives, and measures established by the commissioner, the commissioner may withhold funding from that program and require the program to compete through a competitive bidding process to receive funding to participate in the program.

The bill amends Section 33.155 of the Education Code to provide that the Texas Education Agency and Communities In Schools, Inc. shall work together to maximize the effectiveness of the Communities In Schools program.

The bill amends Section 42.152 of the Education Code to provide, in pertinent part, that from the total amount of funds appropriated for allotments under such section, the commissioner shall, each fiscal year, withhold an amount to be determined by the commissioner, but not less than \$30 million for prekindergarten through high school programs under Subchapter E, Chapter 33,

and distribute that amount as provided by Section 33.156. After deducting the amount withheld from the total amount appropriated for the allotment, the commissioner shall reduce each district's tier one allotments in the same manner described for a reduction in allotments under Section 42.253 and shall allocate funds to each district accordingly.

The bill provides that Sections 33.151(1), 33.153, and 33.155(b) and (c), Education Code, are repealed.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The caption of the original bill reads "relating to funding of the Communities in Schools program." The caption of the substitute bill reads "relating to the Communities in Schools program."

The original contained the provision described above in the ANALYSIS section, and incorporated herein by reference, amending Section 42.152 of the Education Code. The substitute also contains such provision, but adds the provisions described above in the ANALYSIS section, and incorporated herein by reference, which amend Sections 33.154 and 33.155 of the Education Code, and adds the provision, as described above in the ANALYSIS section and incorporated herein by reference, which repeals certain provisions of the Education Code.