

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 374
By: Bonnen
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Section 34.0021, Education Code, requires a school district to conduct school bus emergency evacuation training for students and teachers at least twice a year for at least one hour per training session. This requirement applies to all school districts, even those without their own transportation systems. This training requirement was created to improve the safety of children when riding school buses. However, limited financial resources and instructional classroom time have made it challenging for some school districts to comply with this training requirement.

C.S.H.B. 374 authorizes, rather than requires, each school district to conduct school bus emergency evacuation training for students and teachers and encourages, rather than requires, a school district that chooses to conduct a training session to conduct the session in a specified manner.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 374 amends the Education Code to authorize, rather than require, each school district to conduct school bus emergency evacuation training for students and teachers. The bill encourages a school district that chooses to conduct a training session to conduct the session in the fall of the school year, rather than requiring all school districts to conduct training sessions at least twice each school year, with one in the fall and one in the spring. The bill also encourages such a school district to structure the training session so that a portion of the session occurs on a school bus and the session lasts for at least one hour, rather than requiring that a portion of the training session occur on a school bus for that amount of time. The bill encourages a school district to review, immediately before each field trip involving transportation by school bus, school bus emergency evacuation procedures with the school bus passengers, including a demonstration of the school bus emergency exits and the safe manner to exit. The bill repeals the provision requiring a district to provide the Department of Public Safety (DPS) with a record certifying the district's completion of the training, and repeals the provision authorizing DPS to adopt rules necessary to implement provisions relating to school bus emergency evacuation training. The bill makes its provisions applicable beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

C.S.H.B. 374 repeals Sections 34.0021(d) and (e), Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 374 authorizes each school district to conduct school bus emergency evacuation training for students and teachers and encourages a school district that chooses to conduct such training to conduct the training session in a certain manner, making those provisions permissive rather than repealing all provisions relating to the current requirement for school bus emergency evacuation training as in the original. C.S.H.B. 374 makes its provisions applicable beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, rather than making its provisions effective on the effective date of the bill as in the original.