

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 626
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Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, the Education Code provides for parental rights and responsibilities and articulates the parents' role as partners in their children's education. Current law encourages parents' active participation in creating and implementing educational programs for their children.

C.S.H.B. 626 requires educational involvement agreements to be developed by the Texas Education Agency, authorizes school districts to use the agreements, and encourages the agreements to be signed by the necessary parties to a student's educational success, namely the parent, the student, and the teachers and administrators, encouraging synchronized dialogue between the student's parent and teachers and administrators.

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

C.S.H.B. 626 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to adopt educational involvement agreement forms for optional use by school districts stating the respective responsibilities of the student, parent, teacher, and principal. The bill authorizes a school district that elects to use the educational involvement agreements to encourage students, students' parents, teachers, and principals to sign an educational involvement agreement.

C.S.H.B. 626 requires an agreement signed by a parent to include the parent's responsibilities regarding the student's education, which may include reading to the student, if appropriate to the student's grade or reading level; reviewing and checking the student's homework; and contributing at least five hours of the parent's time to the school each year by attending school-related activities, attending parent-teacher association meetings, attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering at the school, or chaperoning school-sponsored events. The bill requires an agreement signed by a student to include the student's responsibility to read each day before or after school, if appropriate to the student's grade and reading level; use school equipment and property in a safe, appropriate manner; follow the instructions of school staff; complete and submit homework in a timely manner; and act in a respectful manner. The bill requires an agreement signed by a teacher or principal to include the responsibility of the teacher or principal to provide each student with proper instruction, supervision, and interaction; maximize the educational and social experience of each student; perform professional responsibilities in a manner that is in the best interest of each student; provide the parents of each student with timely progress reports; and be available to parents to discuss concerns.

C.S.H.B. 626 authorizes a school district to revise the TEA-adopted form to include information in addition to the required information above. The bill provides that the agreement provided to a student's parent may be accompanied by information regarding the manner in which a parent may contact the student's teachers or principal; homework and grading policies; directions for locating resource material; methods for assisting the student with school work at home; details

on how student progress reports will be sent to the parent and how a parent may request a progress report; school rules and policies; dress codes; the availability of assistance to a parent of limited English proficiency; information on free and reduced-price meals; and opportunities for parents to become involved in the student's education or to volunteer at the school. The bill prohibits a school district from punishing a student, parent, teacher, or principal who does not sign an educational involvement agreement used by a district.

C.S.H.B. 626 authorizes the commissioner of education to adopt rules as necessary to implement these provisions and requires TEA to adopt educational involvement agreement forms for optional use by school districts as soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill and authorizes each school district to use the agreement form beginning with the 2010-2011 school year.

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. 626 differs from the original by requiring the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop multiple forms, one for a parent, one for a student, and one for a teacher or principal, with each including certain responsibilities specific to that particular individual as a student, parent, or educator, respectively, whereas the original required only one multi-purpose form to be signed by all parties involved.

C.S.H.B. 626 differs from the original by specifying that educational involvement agreement forms adopted by TEA shall be for optional use by a school district, whereas the original required a school district to use a TEA-adopted agreement form.

C.S.H.B. 626 removes a provision from the original requiring a school district to provide the agreement to persons encouraged to sign it within a certain number of days after a school year begins or after a student enrolls in the school and to provide a parent with a reasonable opportunity to sign the agreement.

C.S.H.B. 626 removes a provision from the original authorizing the agreement provided to a student's parent to be accompanied by information regarding the student's course curriculum or grade level standards, including a calendar indicating test dates and project due dates and dates of scheduled conferences between teachers or administrators and the parent. The substitute removes language in the original specifying that information accompanying the parent's agreement form regarding directions for locating resource material be directions for locating resource material for the student's courses or grade level. The substitute specifies that such accompanying information for parents addresses school rules and policies, rather than classroom rules and policies as in the original.

C.S.H.B. 626 adds a provision not in the original requiring the agreement form signed by a teacher or principal to include the responsibility of the teacher or principal to provide the parents of each student with timely progress reports.

C.S.H.B. 626 adds a provision not in the original prohibiting a school district from punishing a student, parent, teacher, or principal who does not sign an educational involvement agreement used by the district.