

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 987
By: Shapiro
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A key purpose of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. In November 2007, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) changed its rules to require a student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee to consider transition issues beginning when the student turns 16 years of age in place of the previous requirement that planning begin at 14 years of age. Successful planning for success after school for students with special needs often takes years, and by 16 years of age, many students with disabilities have already dropped out of school.

S.B. 987 requires TEA rules to provide that transition planning for a student with special needs begins not later than the date the student reaches 14 years of age.

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

S.B. 987 amends the Education Code to require rules adopted by the commissioner of education for compliance with federal requirements relating to transition services for students who are enrolled in special education programs to provide that transition planning begins for a student not later than when the student reaches 14 years of age. The bill makes its provisions applicable beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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