

By: Walle

H.B. No. 1741

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a parental involvement pilot program in certain school districts.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Sections 26.001 through 26.013, Education Code, are designated as Subchapter A, Chapter 26, Education Code, and a heading is added to Subchapter A to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER A. PARENTAL RIGHTS

SECTION 2. Section 26.001(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Parents are full partners with educators, administrators, and school district boards of trustees in their children's education. Parents shall be encouraged to actively participate in creating and implementing educational programs for their children.

SECTION 3. Chapter 26, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter B to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER B. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 26.051. ESTABLISHMENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PILOT PROGRAM. (a) The commissioner by rule shall establish a pilot program under which a participating school district shall develop a parental involvement plan that reflects the needs of students and their families. Parents of children enrolled in the district shall be consulted as the district develops the plan.

1 (b) A school district may apply to the commissioner to
2 participate in the pilot program. Subject to receipt of acceptable
3 applications, the commissioner shall select 100 districts to
4 participate in the program.

5 (c) A parental involvement plan developed under Subsection
6 (a) shall:

7 (1) involve parents of students at all grade levels in
8 a variety of roles;

9 (2) be comprehensive and coordinated; and

10 (3) recognize that communication between a student's
11 home and school should be regular, two-way, and meaningful.

12 (d) A participating school district shall review and update
13 the district's parental involvement plan each school year and file
14 a copy of the plan with the agency.

15 Sec. 26.052. PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT.

16 (a) To encourage communication with parents, a school in a
17 participating school district shall:

18 (1) provide age-appropriate and grade-appropriate
19 family kits describing:

20 (A) the district's parental involvement plan
21 developed under Section 26.051;

22 (B) the recommended role of the parent, student,
23 teacher, and school;

24 (C) ways for parents to become involved in their
25 children's school and education;

26 (D) activities planned throughout the school
27 year to encourage parental involvement; and

1 (E) a system to allow the parent to communicate
2 with teachers and the principal in a regular, two-way, and
3 meaningful manner;

4 (2) schedule at least two parent-teacher conferences
5 for each student during a school year; and

6 (3) schedule open houses at least twice during the
7 school year.

8 (b) The requirements prescribed by Subsection (a)(2) may be
9 satisfied by personal communication between a parent and a teacher
10 during an open house.

11 Sec. 26.053. PARENT EVENINGS. A school in a participating
12 school district shall aid parents in assisting a student by
13 scheduling regular "Parents Make the Difference" evenings at which
14 parents are given a report on the state of the school and an
15 overview of:

16 (1) the material students will learn;

17 (2) student assessment under Subchapter B, Chapter 39,
18 including:

19 (A) the subject areas in which students will be
20 assessed;

21 (B) the manner in which students will be
22 assessed; and

23 (C) the dates on which assessment instruments
24 will be:

25 (i) administered; and

26 (ii) readministered;

27 (3) what parents should expect for their children's

1 education; and

2 (4) how parents can assist in their children's
3 education.

4 Sec. 26.054. PARENT VISITATION POLICY. A school in a
5 participating school district may not enforce a policy adopted
6 under Section 38.022 in a manner that discourages a parent from
7 visiting the school, and may not adopt other policies or procedures
8 that discourage a parent from visiting the school.

9 Sec. 26.055. PARENT CENTER. (a) Each school in a
10 participating school district shall establish a parent center to:

11 (1) welcome parents to the school and provide parental
12 support and assistance;

13 (2) provide access to community resources to
14 strengthen school programs, family practices, and student
15 learning;

16 (3) provide parents access to teachers and key school
17 personnel; and

18 (4) provide students and parents with a building area
19 in which to establish relationships with other students, parents,
20 teachers, and school personnel.

21 (b) A parent center must contain a variety of written
22 materials related to student success in school, including
23 information explaining:

24 (1) instructional programs available at the school;

25 (2) extracurricular programs available at the school;

26 (3) how parents of high school students can be
27 involved in the decisions affecting course selection, career

1 planning, and preparation for postsecondary opportunities;

2 (4) the school's procedure for resolving parental
3 concerns, including how to define the problem, whom the parent
4 should approach first, and how to develop solutions;

5 (5) parental rights and responsibilities under this
6 chapter; and

7 (6) school district and school procedures.

8 (c) A parent center administrator shall sponsor seminars
9 to:

10 (1) inform parents of high school students about how
11 to be involved in the decisions affecting course selection, career
12 planning, and preparation for postsecondary opportunities; and

13 (2) inform parents of parental rights and
14 responsibilities under this chapter.

15 (d) A school in a participating district shall make a good
16 faith effort to recruit at least one parent support specialist, as
17 described by Section 26.056, to assist with the management and
18 operations of the parent center. If a school is unable to identify
19 a person to serve as parent support specialist, management of the
20 parent center shall be assigned to school personnel.

21 (e) An institution of higher education selected by the
22 commissioner on the basis of proposals submitted in response to a
23 request for proposals issued by the commissioner shall develop a
24 survey for a parent to complete about the parent center in a child's
25 school. The survey shall assess:

26 (1) how the centers are addressing problems in public
27 schools and communities; and

1 (2) the strengths and weaknesses of the centers.

2 Sec. 26.056. PARENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM. (a) For
3 the purposes of this subchapter, "parent support specialist" means
4 a person who serves as a liaison between teachers, other school
5 personnel, parents, and the community in the person's role as
6 manager of a parent center under Section 26.055. A parent support
7 specialist may be compensated or serve in a volunteer capacity. If
8 a school in a participating school district has a significant
9 percentage of students whose parents speak a language other than
10 English, a person selected as parent support specialist for the
11 school should, if practicable, be bilingual in English and the
12 other language.

13 (b) The parent support specialist program is established to
14 provide teachers, other school personnel, parents, and the
15 community with a parent support specialist to:

16 (1) manage a school's parent center under Section
17 26.055;

18 (2) conduct parent surveys under Subsection (c)(1);
19 and

20 (3) conduct information sessions under Subsection
21 (c)(3).

22 (c) A parent support specialist shall:

23 (1) conduct a survey to determine parent concerns
24 about the school and to solicit parents' ideas for improving the
25 school, including ways to foster a relationship between parents,
26 school, and the local community;

27 (2) provide the results of the survey conducted under

1 Subdivision (1) to teachers and other school personnel; and
2 (3) conduct at least two one-hour information sessions
3 during the school year for teachers and other school personnel to
4 discuss parent and community concerns about the school and to
5 emphasize best practices for developing strong relationships with
6 parents and the community.

7 (d) A participating school district shall either establish
8 a program or join with an existing provider to educate and train
9 persons to serve as parent support specialists. The agency shall
10 develop minimum standards for the program.

11 Sec. 26.057. COMMUNITY RESOURCES. A school in a
12 participating school district shall take advantage of community
13 resources by:

14 (1) contacting alumni from the school and creating an
15 alumni advisory commission to provide advice and guidance for
16 school improvement; and

17 (2) engaging in partnership with institutions of
18 higher education located in the community.

19 Sec. 26.058. RULES. The commissioner may adopt rules as
20 necessary to implement this subchapter.

21 Sec. 26.059. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September
22 1, 2015.

23 SECTION 4. This Act applies beginning with the 2011-2012
24 school year.

25 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
26 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
27 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this

H.B. No. 1741

1 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this

2 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.