

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1352
By: Van de Putte
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Multiple tragic events have taken place recently, and interested parties assert that it has become clear that mental health needs to become a priority issue. The parties contend that one of the best ways to address this matter is by identifying mental health concerns in children. On average, children spend eight hours a day in school, and the parties maintain that schools may be the best medium through which to promote mental wellness. The parties note that mental wellness is a persistent concern among children, as it is reported that up to 30 percent of school-aged children experience at least moderate behavioral, social, or emotional problems. The interested parties also assert that children need to be mentally and physically healthy in order to focus on learning in school. S.B. 1352 seeks to address this issue by incorporating mental wellness into coordinated school health programs.

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

S.B. 1352 amends the Education Code to expand the duties of a school district's local school health advisory council to include recommending policies, procedures, and strategies, in addition to curriculum appropriate for specific grade levels designed to prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease, and Type 2 diabetes through the coordination of several items. The bill requires such recommended policies, procedures, strategies, and curriculum also to be designed to prevent mental health concerns and clarifies that the recommended policies, procedures, strategies, and curriculum involve the coordination of school health services, counseling and guidance services, a safe and healthy school environment, and school employee wellness, in addition to other items.

S.B. 1352 includes local community health providers and local substance abuse services providers among the groups from which a school district board of trustees is authorized to appoint a person to the district's local school health advisory council. The bill requires the council to review the adopted health education curriculum for accuracy and content related to mental health and to consider the inclusion of the recognition of signs and symptoms related to mental illness, mental health stigmas, substance abuse, and stress management; to make recommendations regarding professional development designed to promote the ability of school district staff to build positive relationships with students, increase school connectedness, and improve recognition and understanding of mental health issues; and to make policy recommendations to the school district concerning the integration of social and emotional learning into the academic curriculum.

S.B. 1352 requires the coordinated health programs made available by the Texas Education Agency to each school district and designed to prevent certain conditions to include the prevention of mental health concerns. The bill requires each coordinated health program to provide for coordinating, in addition to other elements, physical and mental health policies,

services, and supports.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.