

By: Villarreal

H.B. No. 1479

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing a committee in certain counties to recommend a uniform truancy policy.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 25, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 25.0916 to read as follows:

Sec. 25.0916. UNIFORM TRUANCY POLICIES IN CERTAIN COUNTIES.

(a) This section applies only to a county:

(1) with a population greater than 1.5 million; and

(2) that includes at least:

(A) 15 school districts with the majority of district territory in the county; and

(B) one school district with a student enrollment of 50,000 or more and an annual dropout rate spanning grades 9-12 of at least five percent, computed in accordance with standards and definitions adopted by the National Center for Education Statistics of the United States Department of Education.

(b) A committee shall be established to recommend a uniform truancy policy for each school district located in the county.

(c) Not later than September 1, 2013, the county judge and the mayor of the municipality in the county with the greatest population shall each appoint one member to serve on the committee as a representative of each of the following:

(1) a juvenile district court;

- 1           (2) a municipal court;
- 2           (3) the office of a justice of the peace;
- 3           (4) the superintendent or designee of an independent  
4 school district;
- 5           (5) an open-enrollment charter school;
- 6           (6) the office of the district attorney; and
- 7           (7) the general public.

8           (d) Not later than September 1, 2013, the county judge shall  
9 appoint one member to serve on the committee from the house of  
10 representatives who is a member of the standing legislative  
11 committee with primary jurisdiction over public education.

12           (e) The county judge and mayor of the municipality in the  
13 county with the greatest population shall:

14           (1) both serve on the committee or appoint  
15 representatives to serve on their behalf; and

16           (2) jointly appoint a member of the committee to serve  
17 as the presiding officer.

18           (f) Not later than September 1, 2014, the committee shall  
19 recommend:

20           (1) a uniform process for filing truancy cases with  
21 the judicial system;

22           (2) uniform administrative procedures;

23           (3) uniform deadlines for processing truancy cases;

24           (4) effective prevention, intervention, and diversion  
25 methods to reduce truancy and referrals to a county, justice, or  
26 municipal court;

27           (5) a system for tracking truancy information and

1 sharing truancy information among school districts and  
2 open-enrollment charter schools in the county; and

3 (6) any changes to statutes or state agency rules the  
4 committee determines are necessary to address truancy.

5 (g) Compliance with the committee recommendations is  
6 voluntary.

7 (h) The committee's presiding officer shall issue a report  
8 not later than December 1, 2015, on the implementation of the  
9 recommendations and compliance with state truancy laws by a school  
10 district located in the county.

11 (i) This section expires January 1, 2016.

12 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
13 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
14 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
15 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
16 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.