

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 674
By: Campbell
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that many Texas children have a mental illness or addictive disorder and assert that educators, given the significant amount of time they spend with children, are in a unique position to steer children in need of care for a mental illness or addictive disorder toward treatment. The parties further note that relevant training for this assistance is provided to some, but not all, educators. The parties contend that such inconsistency creates duplicative work, introduces a risk of some educators not being instructed on applicable best practices, and causes confusion among schools as to the appropriate training for educators. S.B. 674 seeks to resolve this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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. 674 amends the Education Code to replace instruction in detection of students with mental or emotional disorders with instruction regarding mental health, substance abuse, and youth suicide as instruction a person must receive as part of the training required to obtain certain educator certification. The bill requires the instruction to be provided through a program selected from the list of recommended best practice-based programs established under Health and Safety Code provisions relating to mental health promotion and intervention, substance abuse prevention and intervention, and suicide prevention and to include effective strategies for teaching and intervening with students with mental or emotional disorders, including de-escalation techniques and positive behavior interventions and supports. The bill repeals statutory provisions requiring the instruction to be developed by a panel of experts in the diagnosis and treatment of mental or emotional disorders who are appointed by the State Board for Educator Certification and to include information on characteristics of the most prevalent mental or emotional disorders among children, identification of mental or emotional disorders, effective strategies for teaching and intervening with students with those disorders, and providing notice and referral to a parent or guardian of a student with such a disorder.

S.B. 674 repeals Section 21.044(c-2), Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.