

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 940
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas parents, educators, and taxpayers now have access to basic information about their Pre-K classrooms, such as class size, number of students per teacher, and what assessments, if any, are being administered. Many of the same low-income children in public Pre-K are products of the subsidized child care program housed at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Every year TWC and its network of 28 local workforce development boards serves over 100,000 children at a cost to the taxpayers of half a billion dollars per year. Currently, too little coordination exists between these two systems. It is unnecessarily burdensome for policymakers to ensure the accountability for hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and for school districts to partner with private child care providers.

S.B. 940 ensures that taxpayers have clear data when children transition from the subsidized child care program at TWC to Pre-K and public schools. TWC spends approximately half a billion dollars per year on child care for low-income, working parents. However, it is difficult to determine the impact of these dollars on the ultimate educational success of these children. Coordination between TWC and the Texas Education Agency will ensure greater impact from dollars invested in both Pre-K and child care—a big win for educators, parents, taxpayers, and—most importantly—children.

As proposed, S.B. 940 amends current law relating to the evaluation of and improvements to the quality of TWC's subsidized child care program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 302.0042, Labor Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (c), as follows:

(b) Requires that the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) evaluation assess the average cost incurred by child care providers (providers) in providing child care in each local workforce development area (area); the average price charged by providers in each area; the number of vacancies for full-time program enrollment, rather than vacant slots, available for child care placement in the area; the total number of providers participating in certain programs in each area and certain star rated providers in the area; the number of providers participating in a certain program in each area as a percentage of the total number of providers in the area and certain star rated providers in the area as a percentage of the total number of providers in the area; the total number of children enrolled in providers participating in a certain program in each area and the number of children enrolled in certain star rated providers in the area; and the number of children enrolled in providers participating in the certain program in each area as a percentage of the total number of children enrolled in providers in the area and the number of children enrolled in certain star rated providers in the area as a percentage of the total number of children enrolled in providers in the area. Redesignates existing Subdivisions (4), (5), and (6) as Subdivisions (5), (6), and (7). Makes conforming changes.

(c) Requires TWC to, for the purpose of evaluation, annually conduct a survey in each area to determine the average cost incurred by providers in providing child care in the area and the average price charged by providers for child care in the area.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 302.0043, Labor Code, by adding Subsection (c-1) and amending Subsections (e) and (f), as follows:

(c-1) Requires TWC to measure and evaluate the progress of TWC's child care program regarding coordination with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to enable the submission of certain relevant data, coordination with TEA, school districts, and open-enrollment charter schools on any prekindergarten quality improvement efforts, facilitation of provider enrollment in a certain program and progression of providers to the highest rating level in the program, and development and implementation of certain rates and payments to allow participating providers to provide high quality child care.

(e) Requires TWC to make the information collected by TWC and TWC's findings available to local workforce development boards, school districts, open enrollment charter schools, and the public.

(f) Requires that the report include information described by Sections 302.0042(b)(8)-(11) and evaluate the findings of the survey conducted under Section 302.0042(c).

SECTION 3. Amends Section 302.00435, Labor Code, as follows:

Sec. 302.00435. SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROGRAM; INPUT POLICY. (a) Redesignates existing text as Subsection (a) and makes no further changes to this subsection.

(b) Requires that the policy developed under Subsection (a) include methods for obtaining input from TEA, school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, relevant businesses, and the public regarding improving coordination between the subsidized program and prekindergarten programs and increasing the quality of and access to the subsidized child care program.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2017.