

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1557
By: Lucio
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been reported that military-connected students may require certain services due to being highly mobile and often having emotional or behavioral needs related to the deployment of a parent. As such, when military families come to Texas, they look for schools that can accommodate these needs and provide relevant programming to address them. It has been noted that, while many schools offer programs for military family assistance, there is no easy way for these families or other military personnel to identify schools engaged in best practices with regard to this student population. S.B. 1557 seeks to address this issue by establishing the Purple Star Campus program, which recognizes campuses that develop practices and programs to assist military-connected students.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Education Agency in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1557 amends the Education Code to redefine the term "military-connected student" for purposes of transition assistance for military dependents to mean a student enrolled in a school district or open-enrollment charter school who:

- is a dependent of a current or former member of:
 - the United States military;
 - the Texas National Guard; or
 - a reserve force of the United States military; or
- was a dependent of a member of such a military or reserve force who was killed in the line of duty.

The bill requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to designate a district campus as a Purple Star Campus if the campus applies and qualifies for the designation. For purposes of qualification as a Purple Star Campus, a campus must:

- designate a staff member as a military liaison with duties specified by the bill;
- maintain an easily accessible web page on the campus website that includes certain resources for military-connected students and their families;

- maintain a transition program led by students, where appropriate, that assists military-connected students in transitioning into the campus;
- offer professional development for staff members on issues related to military-connected students; and
- offer at least one initiative specified by the bill.

S.B. 1557 authorizes a campus to partner with the district to provide the required website, professional development, and initiative for purposes of complying those requirements. The bill requires TEA to adopt rules as necessary to administer the bill's provisions. The bill applies beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.