

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R2688 CAE-D

S.B. 2312
By: Bettencourt
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Prior to the establishment of independent school districts, a majority of Texans were educated via "county schools." These schools were the typical one room school houses and were overseen by a county school superintendent and county school board. As transportation improved and Texas became less rural, independent school districts were created and slowly the need for a county school board decreased. All Harris County students were moved to independent school districts by 1966, but Harris County Trustees (later changing its name to the Harris County Department of Education) did not disband as other boards did across Texas.

After the Dallas County Schools was abolished last session, the Harris County Department of Education and the Dallas County Schools is the only remaining county school districts remaining in Texas. Since 1978, the State of Texas stopped funding county school trustees. Fifty-six percent of the HCDE is being funded by fees for services and is allowed to collect a local property tax called an "equalization tax." Additionally, there is overlap of services provided between Region 4 Education Service Center (Region 4) and HCDE. Region 4 has a much larger span, providing service to 50 traditional school districts and 45 charter school districts in a seven county area. According to their website, HCDE supports the educational needs of 25 school districts in Harris County.

S.B. 2312 amends current law relating to providing for the review of certain county departments of education by the Sunset Advisory Commission.

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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. (a) Provides that the county department of education (department) in a county with a population of 3.3 million or more according to the most recent federal decennial census is subject to review under Chapter 325, Government Code (Texas Sunset Act), as if the department were a state agency, but the department is prohibited from being abolished under that chapter. Requires the review to be conducted as if the department were scheduled to be abolished September 1, 2021.

(b) Requires the review to assess the department's governance, management, and operating structure, and the department's compliance with legislative requirements.

(c) Requires the department to pay the cost incurred by the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission (Sunset) in performing a review of the department under this section. Requires Sunset to determine the cost, and requires the department to pay the amount promptly on receipt of a statement from Sunset detailing the cost.

(d) Provides that this Act expires September 1, 2023.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2019.