

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1630
By: Bettencourt
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

During the legislative interim period, 10 members of the senate served on the Senate Special Committee to Protect All Texans. One of the many issues discussed by the committee was the need to empower schools to do more to address truancy. S.B. 1630 seeks to address truancy by requiring each public school district and open-enrollment charter school to adopt and implement an attendance policy to inform parents and students at the beginning of the school year regarding the importance of attending school and provide appropriate support to students who fail to regularly attend school.

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. 1630 amends the Education Code to require the board of trustees of each public school district and the governing body of each open-enrollment charter school to adopt and implement an attendance policy to inform students and parents regarding the importance of regular attendance and provide appropriate supports to students who fail to regularly attend school. The attendance policy must do the following:

- describe the benefits of regular attendance;
- describe the consequences of failing to regularly attend school, including the negative effects on a student's academic progress and a student and the student's family as a result of referral to a truancy court for truant conduct;
- provide for a parent to elect to receive notifications of the student's absence from school for a day or part of a day, regardless of whether the student's absence is excused or unexcused, through:
 - email or text message, if the district or charter school has the capability to send notifications through those methods; or
 - first class mail, if the district or charter school does not have the capability to send electronic notifications;
- provide for a meeting between a parent and a school counselor, principal, or appropriate administrator when the student becomes at risk for engaging in truant conduct, as provided by the policy, to discuss the student's behavior and any conditions at the student's home that may be contributing to the student's failure to attend school;
- if a parent fails to attend the meeting, authorize the school attendance officer to make a home visit or otherwise contact the parent to investigate the student's behavior and living

conditions and report the attendance officer's findings to the district or charter school;
and

- establish guidelines to identify a student in need of additional support and to refer the student to in-school or out-of-school services aimed at addressing the student's failure to regularly attend school.

For purposes of the bill's provisions, "parent" includes a person standing in parental relation.

S.B. 1630 requires each board and governing body to provide a copy of the attendance policy to the parent of each student enrolled in the district or charter school at the beginning of each school year. The bill applies beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.