

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1630
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During the interim period, members of the Senate served on the Senate Select Committee to Protect All Texans after the horrific events that occurred at Robb Elementary School. One of the many issues that was discussed is the need to empower schools to do more to address truancy. S.B. 1630 establishes common sense practices that will help address truancy.

S.B. 1630 will require each school district to establish and implement an attendance policy to inform parents and students at the beginning of the school year regarding the importance of attending school. S.B. 1630 will provide appropriate support to students who fail to attend school regularly, and lastly explain the benefits and detriments to not attending school including any criminal repercussions. Next, the bill requires the school to adopt a notification system to notify parents whenever there is an excused or unexcused absence via text, email, or first-class mail.

S.B. 1630 also requires a meeting between a parent of a student enrolled in the district or school with a school counselor, principal, or appropriate administrator at the school when a student violates the established attendance policy. This is important to determine if any issues at home are contributing to the student's failure to attend school. If the parent fails to attend the meeting, then a school attendance officer can make a home visit or contact the parent to investigate the student's behavior and living conditions to report back to the appropriate staffer at the school.

Lastly, S.B. 1630 requires schools to establish guidelines to identify students in need of additional support and refer the student to in-school or out-of-school services aimed at addressing their failure to attend school regularly.

As proposed, S.B. 1630 amends current law relating to an attendance policy adopted by public schools to prevent truancy.

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 Subchapter C, Chapter 25, Education Code, by adding Section 25.0916, as follows:

Sec. 25.0916. ATTENDANCE POLICY. (a) Defines "parent."

(b) Requires the board of trustees of each school district and the governing body of each open-enrollment charter school to adopt and implement an attendance policy to:

(1) inform students and parents regarding the importance of regular attendance; and

(2) provide appropriate supports to students who fail to regularly attend school.

(c) Requires that an attendance policy adopted under this section:

(1) describe the benefits of regular attendance;

(2) describe the consequences of failing to regularly attend school, including the negative effects on:

(A) a student's academic progress; and

(B) a student and the student's family as a result of referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Section 65.003(a) (relating to the definition of truant conduct for a child), Family Code;

(3) provide for a parent of a student enrolled in the district or school 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:

(A) e-mail or text message, if the district or school has the capability to send notifications through those methods; or

(B) first class mail, if the district or school does not have the capability to send notifications as provided by Paragraph (A);

(4) provide for a meeting between a parent of a student enrolled in the district or school and a school counselor, principal, or appropriate administrator when the student fails to attend school for a certain period 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;

(5) if a parent of a student enrolled in the district or school fails to attend a meeting described by Subdivision (4), authorize the school attendance officer to make a home visit or otherwise contact the parent in the manner described by Section 25.091 (Powers and Duties of Peace Officers and Other Attendance Officers) to investigate the student's behavior and living conditions and report the attendance officer's findings to the district or school; and

(6) 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.

(d) Requires each school district or open-enrollment charter school, at the beginning of each school year, to provide a copy of the attendance policy adopted under this section to the parent of each student enrolled in the district or school.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2023–2024 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.