

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2967  
By: Dutton  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The bill author has informed the committee that there are growing concerns about undiagnosed vision problems affecting students' academic performance and overall health. H.B. 2967 seeks to reduce the impact of undiagnosed vision problems on students' learning and to create a more supportive educational environment by establishing reporting requirements and an allotment under the foundation school program relating to vision care for 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 commissioner of education in SECTIONS 1 and 5 of this bill and to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 5 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2967 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA), not later than May 31 of each year, to post on TEA's website a report regarding the number of students in each public school district identified as having a vision disorder or other vision problem requiring vision care under the screening program for special senses and communication disorders disaggregated by the following:

- grade level;
- campus;
- gender;
- race;
- ethnicity;
- whether the student is educationally disadvantaged; and
- the number of times the student has previously been identified as having a vision disorder or other vision problem requiring vision care.

The bill requires the commissioner of education by rule to require each district to report through the Public Education Information Management System information necessary for TEA to prepare the report. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement these provisions as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

H.B. 2967 entitles a district to an annual allotment for vision care equal to \$75 or a greater amount provided by appropriation for each eligible student in average daily attendance who is educationally disadvantaged and has been identified as having a vision disorder or other vision problem requiring vision care under the screening program. The funds allocated for the annual allotment must be used to pay for costs associated with providing vision care to eligible students,

which may include reimbursing the parent of an eligible student for vision care provided to that student. The bill prohibits funds allocated for the allotment from being used to supplant any other funds provided for the same purpose. For these purposes, the bill specifies that vision care includes eye exams and assistive or corrective visual devices, including glasses or contact lenses. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement these bill provisions as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

H.B. 2967 amends the Health and Safety Code to require the rules adopted by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) for the screening program under the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act to allow an individual who attends a public or private school to be screened using visual screening techniques to detect depth perception issues and color blindness. The bill requires the form prescribed by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for the chief administrator of each preschool or school to maintain screening records for each individual in attendance to include the following:

- separate spaces for the student's first and last name;
- a space for the preschool's or school's name;
- a space for the student's grade level; and
- information for a student's parents regarding available resources for low-cost vision care.

The bill requires DSHS to biennially update such form information. The bill requires the executive commissioner of HHSC, as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, to adopt rules necessary to implement these bill provisions.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2025.