

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 843
By: Kolkhorst
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill sponsor has informed the committee that currently, there is no centralized system for tracking and providing public access to detailed information about public school district or open-enrollment charter school bonds, taxes, or the various projects funded by these resources, making it difficult for the public to obtain a clear picture of how the funds are being used. S.B. 843 aims to address this transparency gap and provide a clearer picture of district and charter school finances by requiring the Texas Education Agency to establish and maintain a comprehensive database that will include detailed information about district or charter school bonds, taxes, and the projects funded through those resources.

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 SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 843 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop and maintain a database that includes current information regarding public school district or open-enrollment charter school, including charter district, bonds, taxes, and bond-related projects, including the following:

- for each bond planned, proposed, or issued by a district:
 - the language of the ballot proposition submitted to authorize the issuance of bonds;
 - the projected interest and sinking fund tax rate associated with a proposed bond;
 - the result of an election held for the purpose of issuing a proposed bond;
 - a list of the projects to be funded using the bond;
 - an accounting of the use of the proceeds of any issued bond, including descriptions of any projects paid for with the proceeds;
 - other data related to capital projects, such as new or renovated facilities, funded wholly or partly using the bond, including data regarding funding sources for the projects, project costs, project budget, and project size; and
 - any increase in the interest and sinking fund tax rate resulting from issued bonds;
- for each bond issued for a charter school, including a charter district, a list of the projects to be funded using the bond and an accounting of the use of the proceeds of any issued bond, including descriptions of any projects paid for with the proceeds;
- for maintenance taxes that have been levied or proposed by a district:
 - each district's proposed or approved tax rate; and

- the language of the ballot proposition submitted to authorize the levy of maintenance taxes;
- the results of any automatic election to approve a district's tax rate, including the property tax rate proposed by the district for purposes of the election;
- a report generation function to allow TEA to generate reports of the information required by the bill for each bond planned, proposed, or issued and for maintenance taxes that have been levied or proposed by a district, as applicable, for each district and charter school, including a charter district, disaggregated by geographic area; and
- a function that allows for the proposal of updates or corrections to the information included in the database.

The bill requires a district or charter school, including a charter district, to provide TEA with the information required by the bill for each bond planned, proposed, or issued, maintenance taxes that have been levied or proposed by a district, the results of any automatic election to approve a district's tax rate, and any other information requested by TEA for the purpose of maintaining the database.

S.B. 843 authorizes TEA to contract with a third party as necessary for the development or maintenance of the database and authorizes the commissioner of education to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's provisions. Implementation of a provision of this bill by TEA is mandatory only if a specific appropriation is made for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.