



SENATE ED 4.13 & 4.15.21

The Senate Education Committee is meeting twice this week, once Tuesday and again Thursday. The committee heard bills on topics related to bilingual education and one that would require school boards to create a nonvoting position on the board open to high school juniors and seniors.

Thursday's committee meeting will hear SB 27, a dangerous bill that would expand state funding to full time virtual schools, including ones that operate for profit.

TSTA REGISTERED SUPPORT FOR SEVEN BILLS IN SENATE EDUCATION THIS WEEK:

- **SB 272 by West (D, Dallas)** would require school boards to create a nonvoting position for student trustees open to high school juniors and seniors
- **SB 279 by Hinojosa (D, McAllen)** would require student ID cards issued to students in grade seven or higher to include suicide prevention information
- **SB 560 by Lucio (D, Brownsville)** would require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Texas Education Association (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to develop a plan to improve and expand bilingual education and dual language teachers and programs in particular
- **SB 801 by Kolkhorst (R, Brenham)** would require TEA to develop a list of approved outdoor education agriculture programs for public elementary schools
- **SB 2105 by Zaffrini (D, Laredo)** creates a process for school districts to name the parents of students over the age of 18 and unable to provide informed consent as the "educational representative" for special education purposes
- **SB 2066 by Menendez (D, San Antonio)** would replace the language "limited English proficiency" with "emergent bilingual" in statute when referencing English Learners
- **SB 411 by West** would require charter holders to hold open meetings in the area served by the school

TSTA OPPOSED TWO BILLS THIS WEEK:

- **SB 27 by Taylor (R, Friendswood)** would expand state funding to full-time virtual schools, including ones that operate for profit
- **SB 1232 by Taylor** would establish a commission to oversee the Permanent School Fund
- **SB 1590 by Bettencourt (R, Houston)** would require the State Board of Education (SBOE) to propose rules for providing options for candidate observations to occur in virtual settings. TSTA opposed this bill because there is no quality substitute for in-person field-based observations. This bill would reduce the rigor of educator preparation programs and leave educators less prepared to enter classrooms.
- **SB 741 by Birdwell (R, Granbury)** would allow school marshalls to carry a concealed handgun even if in regular and direct contact with children

OTHER BILLS CONSIDERED IN THIS WEEK'S HEARINGS:

- **SB 746 by Miles (D, Houston)** would require parents to provide student contact information upon their enrollment in school
- **SB 1095 by Creighton (R, Conroe)** would require school districts to notify parents of career and technology or work-based education program offerings
- **SB 1191 by Seliger (R, Amarillo)** would specify that a police officer hired to cover an extracurricular activity is different from a school resource officer and therefore not subject to required trainings
- **SB 396 by Lucio (D, Brownsville)** would require local school health advisory councils to review and make recommendations regarding the marketing of food products that are not offered through the school meal program
- **SB 776 by Lucio** would require the UIL to ensure students with disabilities have an opportunity to participate in team athletic activities
- **SB 2158 by Campbell (R, New Braunfels)** would provide identification kits to parents for the purposes of finding a missing child

The Senate Education Committee also voted Tuesday to approve nine bills and send them to the full Senate, including SB 1267 by Sen. West. This bill would streamline the professional development requirements for teachers and staff, would eliminate duplicative trainings in law and would create a clearinghouse of required trainings including the type and frequency recommendations of industry experts.

This bill is the result of a collaborative working group involving TSTA and other stakeholders that met over the interim. Sen. West indicated that he would offer a floor substitute to address the concerns of disability rights groups related to the trainings the bill removes from the those required for teachers to renew their certificates. TSTA disagrees that the bill as drafted in any way minimizes training related to serving students with special needs and believes philosophically that CPE should be left up to educators and an opportunity to focus on honing teacher craft.

OTHER BILLS THAT PASSED TO THE SENATE FLOOR INCLUDE:

- **CSSB 369 by Kolkhorst** would allow a parent to opt their child out of the graduation requirement to complete a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA)
- **CSSB 462 by Lucio** would allow transportation allotment funds to be used to fund the delivery of food and instructional materials to students
- **SB 1063 by Creighton** would standardize the expiration date of school marshal licenses. This bill was recommended for placement on the Senate's local and uncontested calendar
- **SB 1697 by Paxton (R, McKinney)** would allow a parent or guardian to elect to have their child repeat a grade. This bill was recommended for placement on the Senate's local and uncontested calendar.
- **SB 1696 by Paxton** would order TEA to coordinate the anonymous sharing of information related to cybersecurity between public and private schools
- **CSSB 1615 by Bettencourt** would allow charter schools that serve adults ages 18-50, such as the Goodwill Excel Center, to expand to a maximum of six campuses
- **SB 1522 by Taylor** would set limits on the commissioner of education's ability to hold a district harmless for school funding during a calamity
- **SB 1356 by Hughes (R, Mineola)** would allow the creation of a tutor program to match retired teachers with students in schools