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## HOUSE FLOOR REPORT 5.26.21

SB 1365 was filed in response to a court decision that prevented the Texas education commissioner from taking over the Houston Independent School District based on one school campus performance rating of an “F” for seven consecutive years. The House version of the bill is very different from what was passed in the Senate, and it is unknown whether the Senate will adopt this version or send the bill to conference committee. The most significant change is the removal of the provisions in the bill that provide unbridled power to the appointed education commissioner. However, it fails to address concerns related to the A-F accountability system, restrictions on court challenges, and the potential for unintended consequences.

SB 1716, relating to a supplemental special education services and instructional materials program for certain public school students receiving special education services. This bill passed the Senate as a special education voucher bill. Amendments in the House now provide for oversight by Education Service Centers and by ensuring that ARD committees and public schools are involved the process. Instead of a voucher bill, it is now a vendor bill that allows an unelected commissioner of education to pick and choose the private vendors and the “grant” recipients, while doing nothing to really fund meaningful change for special education students in our public schools.

SB 123, relating to the inclusion of social and emotional skills in character trait instruction provided by public schools.

SB 1888 would require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish, in coordination with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Texas First Early High School Completion Program to allow public high school students who demonstrate early readiness for college to graduate early from high school. The bill also would establish the Texas First Scholarship program under THECB.

SB 2081 would prohibit a public school district, a private entity that operated a prekindergarten program under contract with a school district, or a prekindergarten program provided by a private provider from enrolling more than 22 students in a prekindergarten class.

SB 2050 would require that TEA adopt minimum standards for a school district's policy concerning bullying with which the district would have to comply. The standards would have to:

- include an emphasis on bullying prevention by focusing on school climate and building healthy relationships between students and staff;
- require each district campus to establish a committee to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives;
- require students at each grade level to meet periodically for instruction on building relationships and preventing bullying, including cyberbullying;
- include an emphasis on increasing student reporting of bullying incidents to school employees by increasing awareness about district reporting procedures and by providing for anonymous reporting;

- require districts to collect information annually through student surveys on bullying, including cyberbullying, and use the survey results to develop action plans to address student concerns; and
- require districts to develop a rubric or checklist to assess an incident of bullying and to determine the district's response to the incident.

The bill also would add to the requirements for a bullying prevention policy a requirement that the policy would prevent and mediate bullying incidents between students that interfered with a student's educational opportunities or that substantially disrupted the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

SB 1696, relating to establishing a system for the sharing of information regarding cyberattacks or other cybersecurity incidents occurring in schools in this state. The system would have to:

- include each report of a cybersecurity incident that constituted a breach of system security;
- provide for such reports to be shared between participating schools in as close to real time as possible; and
- preserve a reporting school's anonymity by preventing the disclosure through the system of the school's name at which an incident occurred.

SB 168, relating to active shooter drills conducted by public schools. Requires a school district to adopt trauma-informed methods and policies regarding active shooter drills prior to conducting a drill.

SB 202 clarifies that employer contributions are just that, a burden on the employer, and not the retired teacher. This bill states that the TRS-covered employer (usually a school district), cannot pass employer contributions mandated in the Government Code on to retirees.

SB 226 adds training in "virtual learning" and "virtual instruction" to the existing requirements for teaching certificates for our teachers. This is reinforced by language describing that that training must cover the "best practices" in grading students receiving virtual instruction based on academic progress and developing a virtual learning curriculum that includes both synchronous and asynchronous virtual instruction. These proposed "virtual" education requirements differ from the existing "digital" requirements in that the digital requirements center more around basic computer skills.

SB 279, relating to the inclusion of suicide prevention information on certain student identification cards issued by a public school or public institution of higher education.

SB 369, relating to the notice required regarding the requirement to submit a financial aid application as a condition of high school graduation for public school students.

SB 462, relating to funding under the transportation allotment for transporting meals and instructional materials to a student's residence.

SB 483, relating to a biennial report on the investment returns of the Employees Retirement System of Texas and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

SB 746 requires the parent of a student enrolled in a school district to provide and update a student's contact information.

SB 801 develops an agriculture education program for public elementary schools.

SB 1063 provides courses in personal financial literacy & economics for high school students in public schools.

SB 1095 requires notice regarding the availability to public school students of college credit and work-based education programs and subsidies for fees paid to take certain advanced placement tests.

SB 1109 requires public schools to provide instruction and materials and adopt policies relating to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, and dating violence.

SB 1191 states that the SRO definition does not include a peace officer who provides law enforcement at a public school or public school event only for extracurricular activities.

SB 1351 provides safety guidelines for the donation of food by public school campuses.

SB 2066 simply changes the use of "limited English proficiency" to "emergent bilingual" students in public schools.