

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 204
By: Schwertner
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised regarding barriers to school choice involving unnecessary and burdensome steps to obtain access to public school transportation systems. A recent attorney general opinion reiterated the need for independent school districts to pursue interlocal agreements when students and families choose to transfer to a school in a different school district than where they reside and require bus transportation. Unfortunately, the school districts are frequently unable to come to an agreement, leaving the receiving district to pursue certain waivers from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), which is an additional barrier to school choice. Further concerns were raised when the number of these waivers sought decreased dramatically in the school year following the implementation of recent TEA waiver restrictions. S.B. 204 seeks to remove these barriers to school choice by revising the conditions under which a public school transportation system may serve students located outside the applicable school district.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 204 amends the Education Code to revise the condition under which a board of county school trustees or a school district board of trustees may establish and operate an economical public school transportation system outside the county or district, as applicable, by authorizing either board of trustees to establish and operate the transportation system if students served by the county system or enrolled in the school district reside outside the county or district, as applicable.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.