

- SUBJECT:** Updated information to parents of students in special education programs
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Eissler, Delisi, Hochberg, Olivo, Patrick
0 nays
4 absent — Zedler, Branch, Dutton, Mowery
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 19 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** The federal Individuals and Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) addresses the needs of students with disabilities. A component of the law is the promotion of parental participation in a child's education.
- In 1999, the 76th Legislature enacted SB 870 by Cain, which directed the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to produce and provide to school districts sufficient copies of a comprehensive, easily understood document that explains the process by which an individualized educational program is developed for a student in a special education program and the rights and responsibilities of a parent concerning the process. As a result, the *Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process* was designed to provide parents with necessary information so that they may effectively participate in the admission, review, and dismissal committee meetings on behalf of their child.
- DIGEST:** SB 1490 would direct TEA to routinely update the guide for parents of students in a special education program to include current state and federal law. Following a change in law relating to the development or content of an individualized education program, TEA would be required to update the guide no later than:
- the first anniversary of the effective date of a change in the federal IDEA law;
 - 180 days following the effective date of a change to a federal regulation of IDEA; or

- 180 days following the effective date of a change in state law.

On receipt of the guide from TEA, school districts would be required to provide a copy to the parent of each student enrolled in a special education program. School districts would provide written notice to parents of the availability of the updated guide at the annual meeting of a student's admission, review, and dismissal committee. A school district also would provide notice of the availability of the guide in the district's student handbook, and a district that maintained a web site would provide a link for parents to access the guide directly from TEA's web site.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2007. If the bill took immediate effect, TEA would be required to update the guide no later than September 1, 2007, and school districts would have to distribute the guide to parents no later than October 1, 2007. Otherwise, TEA would have to provide the updated guide to schools no later than December 1, 2007, for distribution by January 1, 2008.

NOTES:

According to the fiscal note, it would cost approximately \$1 million in federal funds to print 500,000 copies of the updated guide every other fiscal year. The bill would have no cost to general revenue.