

**SUBJECT:** Including a student on school district decision-making advisory committee

**COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — Eissler, Hochberg, Allen, Aycock, Farias, Olivo, Patrick, Shelton, Weber

0 nays

2 absent — Dutton, Jackson

**WITNESSES:** For — Joey Crumley, Austin Independent School District; Ramon Dejesus, District Advisory Council; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jessica Cassidy, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Harley Eckhart, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Christine Gendron, Texas Network of Youth Services)

Against — None

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 11.251(b) requires a school district board of trustees to establish a district-level and a campus-level planning and decision-making process that involves district professionals, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. An advisory committee of district professionals, parents, business representatives, and community members must meet regularly as a group and with the district's school board or a designee of the school board.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 2018 would require the board of trustees for a school district that included at least one high school campus to establish procedures for including one student representative on its district-level planning and decision-making committee.

CSHB 2018 would apply beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

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, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 2018 would give students an advisory voice in policies that affect their lives directly, while increasing the value and effectiveness of district-level planning and decision-making advisory committees. Because of social changes and technological advances, what is intuitive to a student is not always intuitive to teachers, educators, and business professionals. A student representative could give a fresh perspective and generate new ideas, such as using online media to promote an event or educate the public.

A few districts already have successfully integrated a student representative into district-level and campus-level planning and decision-making advisory committees, and all independent school districts should be required to hear the voice of those their policies affect. School districts would have the discretion to decide how the student representative would be selected based on local circumstances.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

**NOTES:**

The committee substitute differs from the bill as filed by specifying that only districts with at least one high school campus would be required to have a student representative sit on a district-level planning and decision-making advisory committee.