

SUBJECT: Beginning transition planning sooner for students with disabilities

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Eissler, Allen, Aycock, Farias, Olivo, Shelton

0 nays

5 absent — Hochberg, Dutton, Jackson, Patrick, Weber

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, March 18— 31-0

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jay Arnold, Texas Parent Teacher Association; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Rebecca Flores, Houston ISD; Jackie Lain, the Texas Association of School Boards; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Ted Melina Raab, Texas AFT; Jeff Miller, Advocacy Incorporated; Jodie Smith, Texans Care for Children; Rona Statman, the Arc of Texas)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that children with disabilities have access to free, public, and appropriate education designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. In 2007, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) changed its rules to require a student's admission, review, and dismissal committee to begin transition planning when the student turns age 16 instead of 14. Many students with disabilities drop out of school by the age of 16.

DIGEST: SB 987 would require transition planning to begin by age 14.

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, and would apply beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.