

SUBJECT: Requiring notification for schools lacking nurses, librarians, or counselors

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Gooden, K. King, Koop, Meyer, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — Dutton

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 2 — 19-12 (Bettencourt, Buckingham, Burton, Campbell, Creighton, Hall, Hancock, Huffines, Kolkhorst, Nichols, Schwertner, V. Taylor)

WITNESSES: *On House companion bill, HB 1847:*
For — Laurie G. Combe, Texas School Nurses Organization; Starla Reichel, Texas AFT; Jordan Fogle; (*Registered, but did not testify*): Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Andrew Cates, Nursing Legislative Agenda Coalition; Rachel Gandy, Disability Rights Texas; Bernadette Kingsley, Texas School Nurse Organization; Sebastien Laroche, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Chris Masey, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Ted Melina Raab, Texas AFT (American Federation of Teachers); Shannon Noble, Texas Counseling Association; Reginald Smith, Communities for Recovery; Clayton Travis, Texas Pediatric Society; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Mark Wiggins, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Nakia Winfield, National Alliance of Social Workers-Texas)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*): Kara Belew, Von Byer, and Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Concerned parties note that many parents are not aware of the part-time

status or schedules of school nurses, counselors, or librarians assigned to the student's school. Some have expressed the need for notification to parents if the school does not have a full-time nurse, counselor, or librarian.

DIGEST:

SB 196 would require a public school or open-enrollment charter school to provide written notice to each student's parent or guardian if the school did not have a full-time nurse, school counselor, or librarian, or an equivalent position, assigned to the school for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year. The bill would specify what qualified as the equivalent of a full-time nurse, counselor, or librarian.

The principal of the school would be required to provide the notice within 30 instructional days after the first day the school did not have a full-time nurse, counselor, or librarian at the school.

The school would be required to make a good faith effort to ensure the notice was provided in a bilingual form to any parent or guardian whose primary language was not English and to retain a copy of any notice.

A school could satisfy the notice requirement by posting the notice on the school's website. It would have to be accessible from the home page by use of three links or less.

This 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, 2017, and would apply beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

NOTES:

A companion bill, HB 1847 by Coleman, was reported favorably from the House Public Education Committee on May 3 and placed on the General State Calendar for May 10.