

SUBJECT: Permitting underperforming campuses to operate as community schools

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Ashby, K. Bell, M. González, K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

2 absent — Allison, Dutton

0 present not voting

WITNESSES: For — Gabriel Estrada, Austin Voices for Education and Youth; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Mercedes Quijije-Sudhoff; Irma Sandate; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Steven Aleman, Disability Rights Texas; Betsy Singleton, League of Women Voters of Texas; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Dominic Giarratani, Texas Association of School Boards; Ted Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers (Texas AFT); Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Kristin McGuire, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA); Buck Gilcrease, Texas School Alliance; Lisa Dawn-Fisher, Texas State Teachers Association; and six individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Amy Hedtke)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joe Siedlecki, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Education Code ch. 39A, subch. C governs turnaround plans for campuses that have been identified as unacceptable for two consecutive years.

Sec. 39A.107(a) allows the commissioner of education to approve a

turnaround plan only if the commissioner determines that the campus will satisfy all required student performance standards not later than the second year the campus receives a performance rating following the implementation of the campus turnaround plan. Under sec. 39A.107(c), if the commissioner does not approve a campus turnaround plan, the commissioner must order: appointment of a board of managers to govern the school district; alternative management of the campus; or closure of the campus.

Sec. 39A.111 requires the commissioner to order the appointment of a board of managers to govern the school district or to order the closure of the campus if the campus is considered to have an unacceptable performance rating for three consecutive school years after the campus submits a turnaround plan.

DIGEST:

HB 92 would allow a campus turnaround plan to permit a campus to operate as a community school. A plan to operate as a community school would have to include strategies and programs to coordinate academic, social, and health services and to reduce barriers to learning through partnerships and service coordination.

The bill would prohibit the commissioner of education from closing a campus under Education Code sec. 39A.107 or 39A.111 without allowing the campus the opportunity to operate as a community school under a turnaround plan with at least two years to implement the plan.

An underperforming campus choosing to operate as a community school would be required to:

- establish a school community partnership team composed of the members required for a campus-level planning and decision-making committee and additional community representatives;
- establish a partnership with a lead organization experienced in developing and implementing a community school plan; and
- designate a community school coordinator for the campus whose duties would include recruiting and coordinating services from

community partners.

The bill would require a campus to obtain approval for a community school plan from the school district's board of trustees and at least 75 percent of the campus faculty and staff and 75 percent of parents of students enrolled at the campus.

Community schools operating under a turnaround plan could provide programs and services that included early childhood education, after-school and summer school academic and enrichment programs, college and career preparation, service learning opportunities, leadership and mentoring programs, activities to encourage community and parent engagement, health and social services for students and their families, and parenting classes.

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, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 92 would allow underperforming schools to form partnerships with community organizations to address obstacles students face and thereby improve education outcomes.

Community schools address outside factors, such as homelessness, food insecurity, and lack of access to medical care, that affect children's educational performance. Community schools across the state have been shown to improve school attendance and academic performance by focusing on student and community needs and providing crucial services on-campus. These improvements have led to increased funding and further performance advancements.

To become a community school under a turnaround plan, a campus would have to obtain approval for the plan from campus faculty, the parents of enrolled children, and the district board of trustees. This would be different from other kinds of turnaround plans, which do not require community input, and it would help ensure that communities supported

and engaged with campuses that became community schools.

The two-year turnaround period would allow the campus to reach its full potential. This would be a more reasonable approach than disruptive alternatives such as closing the school. If the school failed to improve its performance after the two-year period, the commissioner would be able to consider other existing options under the Education Code.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 92 could remove vital state oversight by limiting the education commissioner's power to fix a failing school. By requiring the commissioner to provide the opportunity for an underperforming school to continue to operate as a community school, HB 92 could limit the commissioner's ability to make the best decision for students enrolled in the failing school.