

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 356
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Transportation & Homeland Security
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, school districts are required to conduct school bus emergency evacuation training at least twice a year. Additionally, a portion of the training must occur on a school bus for at least one hour. Once these training requirements are complete, school districts must provide a record of completion to the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

The requirement of biannual on-bus training creates a financial burden for school districts. Furthermore, DPS has provided assurances that annual demonstrations with reviews before field trips are sufficient.

As proposed, S.B. 356 amends Section 34.0021 (School Bus Emergency Evacuation Training), Education Code, by requiring only one training session per year. Additionally, S.B. 356 requires a review of evacuation procedures through demonstrations to occur immediately before each field trip and provides a deadline for the school district to inform DPS that the training is complete.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 34.0021, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), and (d) and by adding Subsection (c-1), as follows:

(a) Requires each school district, pursuant to the safety standards established by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) under Section 34.002 (Safety Standards), to conduct a training session for school bus passengers, rather than for students and teachers, concerning procedures for evacuating a school bus during an emergency.

(b) Requires a school district to conduct a school bus emergency evacuation training session in the fall of each school year. Deletes existing text requiring a school district to conduct the school bus emergency evacuation training at least twice each school year, with one training session occurring in the fall and one training session occurring in the spring.

(c-1) Requires a school district to review school bus emergency evacuation procedures with the school bus passengers, including a demonstration of the school bus emergency exits and the safe manner to exit, immediately before each field trip involving transportation by school bus.

(d) Requires the district, not later than the 30th day after the date that a school district completes the training session required by Subsection (b), to provide DPS with a record certifying the district's completion of the training. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.