

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 968
By: West
Education
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Although many types of prescription drugs are abused, there is currently a growing, deadly epidemic of prescription painkiller abuse. Nearly three out of four prescription drug overdoses are caused by prescription painkillers, also called opioid pain relievers. The unprecedented rise in overdose deaths in the United States parallels a 300 percent increase since 1999, according to the Centers for Disease Control. These drugs were involved in 14,800 overdose deaths in 2008, more than cocaine and heroin combined, and those numbers continue to rise.

Prescription drug abuse and abuse by teens has become a serious problem. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, after marijuana, prescription and over-the-counter medications account for most of the top drugs abused by 12th graders in 2013.

Currently, Texas public schools do not include any curriculum regarding prescription drug abuse, despite it being a significant problem within this age group. There are many misperceptions and including prescription drug abuse in the health curriculum would go a long way in curbing abuse.

S.B. 968 requires the compilation of a list of evidence-based prescription drug misuse awareness programs for use in health curriculums in Texas' middle, junior, and high schools.

S.B. 968 amends current law relating to a prescription drug misuse awareness component of the health curriculum used in public schools.

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 28.002, Education Code, by adding Subsection (w), as follows:

(w) Requires the State Board of Education, in adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the health curriculum under Subsection (a)(2)(B) (requiring each school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 to offer, as a required curriculum an enrichment curriculum that includes health, with emphasis on the importance of proper nutrition and exercise), to adopt essential knowledge and skills that address the dangers, causes, consequences, signs, symptoms, and treatment of nonmedical use of prescription drugs. Requires the Texas Education Agency to compile a list of evidence-based prescription drug misuse awareness programs from which a school district may choose a program to use in the district's middle school, junior high school, and high school health curriculums. Provides that, in this subsection, an "evidence-based prescription drug misuse awareness program" means a program, practice, or strategy that has been proven to effectively prevent nonmedical use of prescription drugs among students, as determined by evaluations that use valid and reliable measures and that are published in peer-reviewed journals.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.