

Texas Education Today

News from the Texas Education Agency



84th Texas Legislative Session

Education was one of the main topics during the 84th session of the Texas Legislature. The Texas Education Agency tracked 887 bills that could impact public education or the agency itself. Ultimately, 98 bills passed. This issue of Texas Education Today highlights some of the key measures approved.

[See pages 18 -23](#) for list of education-related bills passed and vetoed.

Governor names Bahorich SBOE chair

Gov. Greg Abbott named Donna Bahorich of Houston chair of the State Board of Education on June 18. She replaces Barbara Cargill of The Woodlands who served four years as chair, the maximum time allowable under state law. [[complete story on page 2](#)]

Bill creates high-quality pre-k program

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 4, a high-quality grant program that would allow districts and charters to receive funding for qualifying prekindergarten students in addition to the half-day Foundation School Program funding. [[complete story on page 10](#)]

Testing changes on horizon

Lawmakers made substantial changes to the state's student assessment program that reduced exit-level requirements for some students and shortened tests for others. [[complete story on page 14](#)]

Videotaping measures approved

The Texas Legislature passed a bill during the 84th Legislative Session that changes how school districts and open-enrollment charters may use video cameras. [[complete story on page 15](#)]

Inside this Issue

SBOE chair	2
Equivalency RFP	3
STAAR® passing rate	4
Charter schools	5
Bond Guarantee Program	6
TEA News Releases	6
Legislative stories	7-17
Legislative Bill list	18-23
SBOE summaries	24

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TEA listservs

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SBOE

Donna Bahorich named State Board of Education chair

Gov. Greg Abbott named Donna Bahorich of Houston chair of the State Board of Education on June 18. She replaces Barbara Cargill of The Woodlands who served four years as chair, the maximum time allowable under state law.

In making the appointment, the governor said, "The process of elevating our state's education system to be first in the nation begins in the classroom, but equally important is the involvement of parents and educators, as well as steadfast support at the state level. I am pleased to announce the appointment of Donna Bahorich as chair of the State Board of Education, and I'm confident that under her leadership, the State of Texas will be able to implement high-quality education standards and provide our students with the tools necessary to succeed for decades to come."

Bahorich, a Republican, began her service on the board in January 2013 and was immediately elected to serve a two-year term as chair of the board's Committee on School Initiatives. Additionally, she served as the board's charter school designee, acting as a liaison to the commissioner of education and the Texas Education Agency on charter school issues.

Chair Bahorich said, "I want to thank the governor for his trust and am truly honored to receive this appointment. I take the responsibility very seriously knowing just how many Texas children are depending on the board to do a great job for them. I look forward to working alongside the governor, legislators, fellow board members, education stakeholders and parents as we dedicate ourselves anew to serving the 5.2 million public school students of Texas."

Her appointment was effective immediately and she chaired her first board meeting in July. The two-year appointment is subject to confirmation by the Texas Senate.

Bahorich holds a Bachelor of Science degree in financial management from Virginia Tech University

and a Master of Arts degree in counseling from Liberty University.



Bahorich is a former executive in the telecommunications industry, having worked for the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company and Mountain Bell. During her time at Bell, she handled multi-million dollar contracts and earned recognition as one of the top five district manager candidates in the company. She also served as a loaned executive to the United Way in her community.

In 2005, Bahorich became the campaign manager for Dan Patrick during his first run for a state senate seat. She subsequently worked as the district director, campaign treasurer, and communications director for then-Sen. Patrick. Bahorich was named the Senate District 7 Volunteer of the Year in 2007. She also served as the 2010 Harris County Republican primary director, assigning polling locations and assembling election personnel for 885 precincts for primary and runoff elections.

An active community volunteer, Bahorich served as a member of the West Houston P-16 Council; graduated from the Leadership Houston program; served as president of the Daughters of Liberty Republican Women; and is a member of the pastor's council at Houston Vineyard Church.



As the SBOE's District 6 representative, Bahorich represents part of Harris County.



SBOE

SBOE asks for High School Equivalency RFP to include possibility for multiple providers

During its July meeting, the State Board of Education provided details regarding information to be included in drafting a new Request for Proposals (RFP) to potentially identify multiple test providers for the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE) exam.

The board in April decided to restructure an earlier RFP that would have allowed the board to select only one vendor. Additionally, the Board extended the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the state's current test provider for the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency exam, GED Testing Service, for six months beyond expiration of the current MOU. The MOU authorized by the Board has been extended through June 30, 2016.

During discussion sessions in both April and July, several Board members expressed concerns that by offering only one high school equivalency exam, students are constrained by both the price and format of the test. Currently, the exam offered

by GED Testing Service is more expensive than versions of the test offered by other competitors. GED Testing Service has also moved to a computer-based test for most test takers, while other vendors offer both a computer-based and a paper-and-pencil version of the exam.

SBOE members debated for several hours topics such as the standards any Certificate of High School Equivalency exam should adhere to, how long a testing contract should be awarded for, and how closely aligned any test must be to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

TEA staff will present a proposed RFP during the next State Board of Education meeting, which will be held Sept. 9-11.

Should the Board approve an RFP document during its September meeting, proposals would tentatively be due in November, with staff presenting results to the Board in January for an earliest possible adoption date of early 2016.

High School Equivalency Testing Fees

Fee	HiSET (ETS)	GED (GEDTS)	TASC (CTB/McGraw Hill)
Battery Total	\$50.00	\$80.00	\$52.00
Per test cost	5 exams x \$10.00 ea	4 exams x \$20.00 ea	5 exams x \$10.40 ea
TEA Administrative Fee	\$15.00 (\$3.00 per test)	\$15.00 (\$3.75 per test)	\$15.00 (\$3.00 per test)
Test Center reimbursement	not included	\$40.00 (\$10.00 per test)	not included
Total cost for full battery	\$65.00 +	\$135.00 *	\$67.00 +
Cost if purchasing individual tests	\$13.00 +	\$33.75 *	\$13.40 +

Pricing derived from information publically disclosed during the 4/16/15 Committee on Instruction meeting.

+ Test Center reimbursement

* Includes Test Center reimbursement



TEA

Class of 2015 STAAR® passing rate hits 92 percent

Following the spring administration of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) end-of-course exams, 92 percent of students in the Class of 2015 have successfully completed all exams required for high school graduation, according to figures released by the Texas Education Agency in May.

Students are required to pass five end-of-course exams – Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology and U.S. History – along with their courses to receive a high school diploma, unless they are eligible to use provision contained in Senate Bill 149, a bill recently passed by the Texas Legislature. The Class of 2015 is the first graduating class under STAAR testing requirements.

The 92 percent figure compares to the 83.5 percent of students in the Class of 2015 who had already passed all five end-of course (EOC) exams before the start of the 2014-2015 school year and were not required to take any state-mandated tests during their senior year. Following the December 2014 STAAR administration, 90.3 percent had successfully passed all five EOCs.

	Start of 2014-2015 School Year	Following Dec. 2014 Administration	Following May 2015 Administration
Passing Rate	83.5%	90.3%	92.0 %

“Passing rates for the Class of 2015 indicate our state is making some progress in closing the achievement gap,” said Commissioner of Education Michael Williams. “Passing rates above 90 percent in each subject for various student groups indicate that school district staff and students are addressing the increased rigor of the EOC testing program.”

The updated chart below shows the breakdown of end-of-course exam passing rates for students in the current Class of 2015.

	Students	Percentage
Passed All End-Of-Course Exams (5)	267,817	92.0%
Passed All But One End-Of-Course Exam	10,509	3.6%
Passed All But Two End-Of-Course Exams	6,277	2.2%
Three or More End-Of-Course Exams Still Needed	6,459	2.2%
TOTAL	291,062	100.0%

Of the 23,245 students who have not passed all EOCS, 16,786 (or 72.2 percent) have passed all but one or two required EOCs and were eligible for consideration under provisions of Senate Bill 149. The new law allows school districts to create individual graduation review committees for those students who have failed up to two STAAR EOCs but have successfully completed their course work.

TEA will collect data this fall to determine the number of students who used this new path to a diploma.

Passing rates (by subject) following 10 administrations for Algebra I, Biology and English; seven administrations for English II; and four administrations for U.S. History are all above 93 percent. In addition, passing percentages in each subject among various student groups (White, Hispanic, African-American and Economically Disadvantaged) are above 90 percent.

◆ See EOC passing rates, page 5



TEA

Five Generation Twenty charter school applicants complete process

Five Generation Twenty charter school applicants in July successfully completed the final step of the state’s application process allowing them to begin operation in Texas for the 2016-2017 school year once any contingencies are met. The five are:

- A+ Unlimited Potential (Houston)
- Kauffman Leadership Academy (Cleburne)
- Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy (Dallas/Fort Worth)
- The Lone Star Language Academy (Plano/Carrollton)
- Trivium Academy (Collin/Denton Counties)

Under Senate Bill 2 passed in 2013 by the 83rd Texas Legislature, the Commissioner of Education is given the authority to grant new open-enrollment charters in Texas and must notify the State Board of Education of those that are approved. A majority of the state board members

present and voting may veto any new charter approved by the Commissioner within 90 days of the Commissioner’s decision.

During its July 17 meeting in Austin, state board members vetoed the application of Athlos Academy, which had proposed operation in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. This charter applicant had been among six originally granted Commissioner approval in June.

Once contracts are signed with these five entities, the state will have 193 charters. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the creation of charter schools in Texas.



To learn more about open-enrollment charter schools in Texas and the application process, visit the Texas Education Agency website at tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Charter_Schools/.

EOC passing rates *continued*

“Passing rates for the Class of 2015 indicate our state is making some progress in closing the achievement gap. Passing rates above 90 percent in each subject for various student groups indicate that school district staff and students are addressing the increased rigor of the EOC testing program.”

**— Michael Williams
Commissioner of Education**

Subject	Passing Rate	White	Hispanic	African-American	Eco. Disadv.
Biology	99.2%	99.7%	99.0%	98.8%	98.8%
Algebra I	97.8%	98.8%	97.6%	96.4%	97.2%
U.S History	97.0%	98.7%	96.0%	95.8%	95.4%
English I	95.8%	98.1%	94.4%	94.5%	93.6%
English II	93.7%	97.1%	92.1%	90.9%	90.7%

Results for school districts and charters are available on the Pearson Access website.



SBOE

Bond Guarantee Program adjusted to help charters, ISDs

State Board of Education members took action in July to ensure that the Bond Guarantee Program continues to provide low-cost bond insurance for both school districts and charter districts.

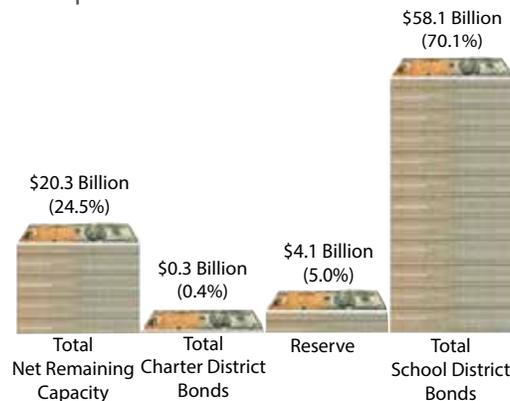
The board approved amendments to the rules governing the Bond Guarantee Program for both charter school districts and independent school districts. The rules will now go out for public comment, with final approval scheduled for September.

The board modified the rule language for both to clarify the definition of nationally recognized investment rating firms and required the nationally recognized ratings firms to have at least one previous charter school rating before being approved for use for charter school districts.

The board also specifically stated that school districts could only use the bonds for facilities directly related to educational purposes. An amendment was added to the charter rules excluding student and teacher housing from

the projects eligible for a guarantee under the definition of new money issue.

Board members also added a requirement that the commissioner maintain a 5.0 percent reserve in the fund so that charter school guarantees do not exceed capacity as the value of the fund changes and new guarantees in process are issued.



Bond Guarantee Program Capacity as of Aug. 31, 2014

Through the Texas Permanent School Fund, the bond program is pledged to guarantee bonds issued by Texas school districts and charter districts, thus enhancing their credit rating. This program is designed for districts with credit ratings lower than AAA. Bonds issued under the Bond Guarantee Program are rated AAA, thus allowing participating school districts and charter districts to borrow at a lower cost.

Since the program's inception in 1985 through Aug. 31, 2014, more than \$120 billion in school bonds have been guaranteed saving Texas taxpayers millions in interest costs.



NEWS

Texas
Education
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TEA News Releases

Official news releases issued by the Texas Education Agency.

[Two Texas teachers named 2013 presidential award winners in math and science](#) (7-21-2015)

[Commissioner Williams extends NIFA application period](#) (7-13-2015)

[2014 Snapshot: School District Profiles now available on TEA website](#) (7-9-2015)

[TEA designates 19 new T-STEM Academies](#) (7-7-2015)

[TEA shares free summer reading resource](#) (6-19-2015)

[Eleven schools spotlighted in TEA best practice case studies](#) (6-11-2015)

[Statement of Commissioner Williams regarding submission of federal waiver renewal](#) (6-3-2015)

[Most students taking STAAR end-of-course exams pass on first try](#) (6-3-2015)





84th Texas Legislative Session

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Legislature

Accountability ratings to move to A-F system in 2017-2018

Texas schools and districts will earn letter grades of A, B, C, D or F instead of the current rating labels of Met Standard and Improvement Required in the state's revised accountability system, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, because of changes made by House Bill (HB) 2804.

The legislation creates a five-domain rating system. Districts and schools will receive a letter grade for each domain, as well as an overall letter grade.

Domain 1 will include the results of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) for grades 3-8 and all End-of-Course (EOC) assessments aggregated across grade levels by subject area, including the percentage of students reaching the satisfactory passing standard and college readiness standard.

Domain 2 will include the percentage of students who meet the standards for annual improvement regardless of whether they meet the satisfactory or

college readiness standards.

Domain 3 will evaluate academic achievement gaps among students from different racial and ethnic groups, as well as socioeconomic backgrounds.

The new law requires that 55 percent of the overall grade be based on Domains 1, 2, and 3.

Domain 4 evaluates different indicators depending on campus type. For elementary and middle schools, student attendance will be the indicator. Middle schools will also be evaluated on dropout rates and the percentage of seventh and eighth-grade students who receive instruction in preparing for high school, college and career.

The law creates the following indicators for high schools: dropout, completion and graduation rates; the percentage of students completing the distinguished level of achievement; the percentage of students earning an endorsement;

♦ See **Accountability ratings**, page 9



Legislature

Lawmakers address numerous school health issues

Numerous health-related bills affecting school districts and charter schools were passed during the 84th Legislative Session. Bills on electronic cigarettes, educator training in suicide prevention and mental health issues, use of sunscreen and epinephrine pins and automatic external defibrillators, are effective with the 2015-2016 school year.

A brief synopsis of each bill is listed below.

HB 2186

New employees to a school district or charter school must be provided staff development training in suicide prevention annually, and existing school district and open-enrollment charter school educators must have the training on a schedule adopted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Training must be selected from the list of recommended best practice-based programs provided by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in coordination with the TEA. Training may also be satisfied through independent review of suicide prevention training material that complies with the guidelines developed by the TEA and is offered online.

SB 66

The legislation allows school districts and charter schools to adopt and implement a local policy for the maintenance, administration, and disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors, or EpiPens. Any policy adopted must permit school personnel and school volunteers who are authorized and trained to administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus, at an off-campus school event or while in transit to or from a school event.

When an EpiPen is administered, the school is required to report certain information to the school district or the charter holder, the physician or other person who prescribed the EpiPen, the commissioner of education, and the commissioner of state health services no later than 10 business days after the date of administration.

In addition, if a school district or open-enrollment charter school implements a policy for the maintenance, administration, and disposal of

EpiPens, the district or school must provide written notice to a parent or guardian of each student enrolled in the district or school.

The commissioner of education and the commissioner of state health services must jointly adopt rules necessary to implement this legislation. The rules must establish the number of epinephrine auto-injectors available at each campus, process for each district and charter school to check the inventory of epinephrine auto-injectors at regular intervals for expiration and replacement, and amount of training required for school personnel and school volunteers to administer an epinephrine auto-injector.

SB 97 (effective Oct. 1, 2015)

This year, school districts and charter schools must add the prohibition of electronic or e-cigarettes to the student code of conduct, and the board of trustees are required to prohibit possessing, smoking, or using e-cigarettes at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property and must ensure that school personnel enforce the policies on school property.

A school district must publish in the student handbook and post on the district's Internet website whether the district has adopted and enforces policies and procedures that prescribe penalties for use of e-cigarettes.

The legislation also prohibits the sale or distribution of e-cigarettes to persons younger than 18 years of age. E-cigarettes are defined as any device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. It also prohibits the possession, purchase, consumption or acceptance of e-cigarettes by an individual under the age of 18.

SB 265

This bill allows a student to possess and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property, or at a school-related event or activity, to avoid overexposure to the sun. The sunscreen does not have to be approved for any medical treatment of an injury or illness if the product is approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use.

◆ See **Health bills**, page 9



Health bills *continued***SB 382**

Training in the use of an automated external defibrillator will now count for credit toward an educator's continuing professional education requirements. Currently there is no requirement or rule allowing this action.

Under the new law, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) will develop and adopt rules allowing an educator to receive the credit after completion of an instructional course on the use of an automated external defibrillator.

SB 674

Educator preparation programs will now have to include training in youth suicide and substance abuse as a requirement for the minimum academic qualifications for anyone seeking educator certification. Training materials must be selected from the list of recommended best practice-based programs that is provided by the Department of State Health Services, in coordination with the TEA. The new law requires the SBEC to develop rules for implementing the legislation.

Accountability ratings *continued*

the percentage of students who complete a coherent sequence of Career and Technical Education courses; the percentage of students meeting the Texas Success Initiative benchmarks; the percentage of students who earn 12 hours of dual credit; the percentage of students who complete Advanced Placement courses; the percentage of students who enlist in the military; and the percentage of students who earn an industry certification.

Domain 4 accounts for 35 percent of the overall grade awarded.

Domain 5 will include three programs related to locally-determined community and student engagement ratings, which will count for 10 percent of the overall performance grade.

Because student testing is being pushed back three weeks, the accountability release date in statute will move from Aug. 8 to Aug. 15 beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

The legislation also creates the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability, which is to develop new recommendations for testing and rating systems.

The 15-member commission will be composed of:

- Four members appointed by the governor
- Three members appointed by the lieutenant governor
- Three members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives

- The chair of the Senate Committee on Education or his designee
- The chair of the Senate Committee on Higher Education or his designee
- The chair of the House Committee on Public Education or his designee
- The chair of the House Committee on Higher Education or his designee
- A member of the State Board of Education (SBOE), as designated by the chair.

The governor will name the presiding officer.

The state's top three leaders will coordinate appointments to ensure that the commission members include at least one of the following representatives:

- A parent or guardian of a public school student
- A public school educator
- A public school educator participating in the Texas Higher Performance Schools Consortium
- A member of the business community
- A member of the civic community
- A leader in student assessment development
- A leader in research regarding student assessment and education outcomes.

The commission is to deliver its recommendations to the governor and legislature by Sept. 1, 2016.



Legislature

High Quality Pre-K Grant program passes Texas Legislature

As part of its focus on early education, the 84th Texas Legislature this spring passed House Bill (HB) 4, a high-quality grant program that would allow districts and charters to receive funding for qualifying prekindergarten students in addition to the half-day Foundation School Program (FSP) funding they already receive for each eligible prekindergarten student.

The Commissioner of Education will establish the amount of grant funding a district or charter receives for each qualifying student in attendance for the entire instructional period on a school day. The amount is not to exceed \$1,500.

A school district or charter that receives grant funding may only use the funding to improve the quality of the school district's prekindergarten program.

To qualify for the grant funding, a student must meet the state prekindergarten eligibility requirements, which have not changed, and be four years of age or older on Sept. 1 of the year he or she begins the program.

A district must select and implement curriculum for a high-quality prekindergarten program that includes Prekindergarten Guidelines, measures the progress of students in meeting the recommended learning outcomes, and doesn't use national curriculum standards developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

A school district may administer diagnostic assessments to students to evaluate student progress for program evaluation purposes, but may not administer a state standardized assessment instrument. An assessment instrument administered to a prekindergarten program class must be selected from a list of appropriate prekindergarten assessment instruments identified by the commissioner.

Each teacher participating in the grant program must be certified and have at least one of five additional qualifications.

Each participating school district must develop and implement a family engagement plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. The family engagement plan must be based on family engagement strategies developed by the Texas Education Agency in collaboration with other state agencies and be based on empirical research; and proven to demonstrate significant positive short-term and long-term outcomes for early childhood education.

A school district may enter into a contract with an eligible private provider to provide services or equipment for the program.

Additional data elements for prekindergarten programs at the district and campus level will be required to be reported to TEA. Also, the district or charter must try to maintain an average ratio of one teacher or teacher's aide for every 11 students in a prekindergarten class.

HB 4 requires the commissioner to develop a prekindergarten training course to be offered to teachers employed by a school district or open-enrollment charter school. The course must offer training in Prekindergarten Guidelines, effective instructional techniques for teaching students using the Prekindergarten Guidelines, and comprehensive classroom curriculum design and implementation.

The legislature appropriated \$118 million dollars to implement the program, which Gov. Greg Abbott designated as one of his legislative priorities this session.

The commissioner must adopt rules to implement this legislation and to establish the grant program.

The first grants are expected to be issued for use in the 2016-2017 school year.



Legislature

Middle school students must learn about diploma options

Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, school districts are required to ensure that every student receives instruction in preparing for high school, college, and a career at least once in either grade seven or grade eight.

The instruction must include information on:

- Creation of a high school personal graduation plan;
- Distinguished level of achievement;
- Each endorsement;
- College readiness standards; and
- Potential career choices and the education needed to enter those careers.

A school district is permitted to provide the required instruction as part of an existing course, provide the instruction as part of an existing Career and Technology Education (CTE) course designated by the State Board of Education (SBOE) as appropriate for that purpose, or establish a new elective course through which to provide the instruction.

To assist school counselors with providing information on postsecondary success and career training, The Center for Teaching and Learning at The University of Texas at Austin is required to develop and make available postsecondary education and career counseling academies for school counselors and other postsecondary advisors employed by a school district at a middle, junior high, or high school.

The Center for Teaching and Learning must solicit input from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), school counselors, the Texas Workforce Commission, institutions of higher education (IHE), and business, community, and school leaders. The academies must provide counselors and other postsecondary advisors with the knowledge and skills needed to counsel students about postsecondary success and productive career planning.

The Center for Teaching and Learning must also develop an online instructional program that districts may use to provide instruction in preparing for high school, college, and a career to students in grades seven or eight.

Legislature

Texas Legislature decriminalizes truancy

The Texas Legislature during its 84th Regular Session passed a bill to decriminalize truancy.

House Bill (HB) 2398 repeals the criminal offense of failing to attend school, but establishes a civil penalty for failing to attend school. It also removes the ability of a juvenile court to find that a child is in need of supervision because of the failure to attend school.

The offense of a parent contributing to nonattendance remains a Class C misdemeanor, but a court may now dismiss a charge against a parent for the offense of contributing to nonattendance if the court finds that the dismissal would be in the best interest of justice and the student demonstrates a low likelihood of recidivism or because sufficient justification exists for the student's failure to attend school.

The bill also extends the compulsory age of attendance from 18 to 19.

Under HB 2398, a district may revoke a student's enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student is 19 year old, is voluntarily enrolled in school, and has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, but the district is first required to issue a warning letter after the student has failed to attend school without excuse three times in a four week period stating that the student's enrollment would be revoked if he or she obtained more than five unexcused absences.

A student is not to be referred to truancy court if the truancy is a result of pregnancy, foster care, homelessness, or being the principal income earner for the student's family. Instead, a district is to offer the student access to additional counseling services.

♦ See **Truancy**, page 12



SBOE

New math options available

Students who are following the state's older high school diploma programs will have two new mathematics classes available to them for graduation credit as early as the 2015-2016 school year.

Action by the State Board of Education in July added two new courses, Statistics and Algebraic Reasoning, to the list of courses that will satisfy a mathematics graduation credit on the Minimum High School Program, the Recommended High School Program, and the Distinguished Achievement Program, effective Aug. 24. The two courses were created over the past year to provide additional advanced mathematics options for students. The courses were already approved to satisfy a mathematics credit requirement on the Foundation High School Program.

Upper classmen who are following the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program are required to earn four math credits – Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and an additional fourth math credit. Students following the Minimum High School Program must earn three math credits, including Algebra I, Geometry, and an additional third credit.

Legislature

Ed prep requirements clarified

Applicants to educator certification programs who apply with a grade point average of less than 2.5 will have to pass a content exam to qualify for admission under the extraordinary circumstances exception.

House Bill (HB) 1300 and HB 2205 clarified the admission requirement after months of lengthy discussion with members of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) over whether applicants were required to have a 2.75 or 2.5 GPA for admittance. Applicants to educator preparation programs must have at least a 2.5 GPA for admission unless they qualify under the revised exception. Additionally, the overall GPA for each incoming cohort in a preparation program may not be less than 3.0.

The previous law had required that each person admitted under the extraordinary circumstances exception must demonstrate achievement in work, business, or career experience that is comparable to the academic achievement represented by the GPA requirement.

The new requirements are effective Sept. 1, 2015. The SBEC must adopt rules and educator preparation programs will need to modify their enrollment policies and procedures to reflect the change.

Truancy *continued*

On the third unexcused absence, a school must initiate a truancy prevention program for the student. A child commits truancy if the student is 12-18 years of age and is required to attend school under Section 25.085; and fails to attend school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

Additionally, school districts' truancy measures must now include at least one of the following:

- A behavior improvement plan that includes school-based community service or a specific description of required or prohibited behavior (not to exceed 45 days) or penalties for additional absences;
- A behavior improvement plan that includes

school-based community service; or

- Referral to counseling, mediation, mentoring, teen court, community-based services or other services to address the student's truancy.

Districts are also required to employ a truancy prevention facilitator or juvenile case manager to implement its truancy prevention measures. To help districts, the TEA must adopt rules to create minimum standards for truancy prevention measures, to establish a set of best practices for truancy prevention measures, and to provide for sanctions for districts that are not in compliance with TEC Section 25.0915.

The bill becomes effective Sept. 1, 2015.



Legislature

New laws impact exams for course credit

The Texas Legislature passed two bills during the 84th Legislative Session that amend the scores students must achieve to receive secondary or higher education course credit respectively.

The first, Senate Bill (SB) 453, instructs districts to give students in grade level six or above credit for a course or subject if the student earns a scaled score of 50 or higher on an exam approved by the local district board of trustees and administered through the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

Previous law required students to receive a scale score of 60 or higher on a CLEP examination to receive credit. The act applies beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.

The second, House Bill (HB) 1992, notifies institutions of higher education (IHE) that they

may not require a score of more than three out of a possible five on an Advanced Placement exam in order to award college course credit unless the institution's chief academic officer determines, based on evidence, that a higher score on the exam is necessary to indicate a student is sufficiently prepared to be successful in a related, more advanced course for which the lower-division course is a prerequisite.

The law currently allows each IHE that offers freshman-level courses to establish policies for granting undergraduate course credit to entering freshmen who have achieved required scores on one or more college-level examinations, including AP exams.

HB 1992 goes into effect with freshmen students entering IHEs beginning in the fall 2016 semester.

Legislature

Costly requirement repealed

During the recent legislative session, lawmakers repealed a provision that would have created costly customized high school diplomas.

Two years ago, a law was passed requiring districts and charter schools to indicate on a diploma if the student obtained a distinguished level of achievement, endorsements or performance acknowledgments under the Foundation High School Program.

School officials told lawmakers that the requirement would add time and expense to the printing of diplomas. Legislators responded by passing House Bill 181, eliminating the requirement. The change took effect in time to be applied to diplomas for the Class of 2015.

However, districts must still include this information on the academic achievement record/transcript of each student.

Legislature

Dual credit options expand

Gaining college credit while in high school just got better for the Texas public school students thanks to changes under House Bill (HB) 505.

Beginning with the coming school year, high school students will no longer be limited in the number of dual credit courses, or hours, they can take during a school year or semester. The bill also removes the grade level limit on when students can take the courses.

Previously students were limited to only two dual credit courses per semester, under rules established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board unless the student's high school principal and the chief academic officer of the college permitted the student to enroll in more than two courses. Students in Early College High Schools were exempt from this rule.

The new law applies to students in both regular school districts and charter school districts and is effective as of the 2015-2016 school year.



Legislature

Substantial STAAR testing changes on horizon

Lawmakers continued to make substantial changes to the state's student assessment program during the 84th session of the Texas Legislature. They reduced exit-level requirements for some students and shortened tests for others.

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 149 attracted the most public discussion.](#) This bill allows a student who has failed up to two end-of-course (EOC) assessments to graduate if approved to do so by an individual graduation committee.

Previously, state law required students to pass five end-of-course assessments - Algebra I, English I and II, Biology and U.S. History - to meet assessment-related graduation requirements.

A second bill, House Bill (HB) 2349, amended state law so that students moving into Texas from out-of-state must only take and pass an EOC for a course in which they are enrolled to meet graduation requirements. Given typical course-taking patterns, a student who moves to Texas in his or her sophomore year or later would likely take only one or two end-of-course exams. The bill requires that test results for these new students be reported separately from other students.

HB 1613 stipulates that a student enrolled in an English language arts or mathematics college preparatory course who meets the college-readiness benchmark of the applicable Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment has satisfied the assessment graduation requirement for that subject area. Rules will be amended prior to the next EOC administration in December 2015 to reflect this change.

HB 743 requires that assessments for grades 3-5 be designed in such a way that 85 percent of students can finish within 120 minutes. For grades 6-8, 85 percent of students must be able to finish each assessment within 180 minutes.

Since the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) was introduced in 2012, most tests have had a 240-minute testing limit, although the majority of students finish in a much shorter time. All previous state tests in Texas were

untimed, which allowed students to spend the entire school day on the assessment if needed.

HB 743 also specifies that an assessment given in grades 3-8 must occur on a single day. This provision will require the writing assessments for fourth and seventh grade to be redesigned to be one-day assessments, which will also require performance standards to be reset. The writing assessments are currently given over two days. The first administration of the restructured writing assessments will occur in spring 2017.

Additionally, HB 1164 establishes a pilot program for the assessment and scoring of writing, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year. TEA and its testing contractors for STAAR must conduct a study to determine an alternative method to assess writing for fourth and seventh grades, as well as for English I and II EOC assessments.

Test validity

HB 743 requires the agency to conduct a study evaluating the content of assessments administered to students in grades 3-8. It will examine how the tests assess standards essential to student success, whether the assessments should test Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) supporting standards, will identify the portion of the TEKS that can be accurately assessed, and assess how the current versions of STAAR compare to the standards. Further action on the studies is pending decisions by the commissioner.

It should be noted that TEA currently follows nationally established procedures to ensure full alignment with the TEKS standards, as well as fairness, accuracy, validity, and reliability of the state program.

All state-developed tests now meet established reliability and validity guidelines as set forth by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. Any new test or substantial modification of a test also undergoes a peer review overseen by the U.S. Department of Education.



Legislature

Bill outlines new videotaping measures in special ed classes

The Texas Legislature passed a bill during the 84th Legislative Session that changes how school districts and open-enrollment charters may use video cameras.

Senate Bill (SB) 507 allows a school to videotape a student and/or record his or her voice without consent from the student's parents in order to promote student safety.

A parent, trustee, or staff member may also request that a school district or open-enrollment charter provide equipment for videotaping in each school in which students receive special education services in a self-contained classroom or other setting.

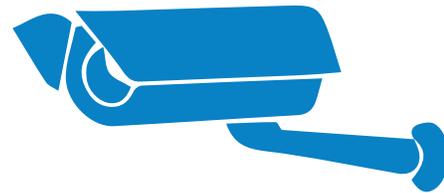
Each campus that receives equipment must place, operate and maintain one or more video cameras in each self-contained classroom or other special education setting in which a majority of students in regular attendance are provided special education services and are assigned for at least 50 percent of the instructional day.

Any video recording is considered confidential and may only be viewed by the parent or guardian of a student, a school district employee involved in an incident documented by the recording, school personnel as designated by commissioner rule or by a school district or charter in response

to a complaint or investigation and appropriate Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Education Agency (TEA) or State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) personnel as part of an investigation.

The Commissioner of Education must establish a grant program for the purchase of video equipment or for the reimbursement of costs for previously purchased video equipment should a surplus of funds be identified in the Foundation School Program (FSP). In awarding grants, the commissioner shall give highest priority to districts with maintenance and operations (M&O) tax rates at the greatest rates permitted by law, followed by districts whose M&O rates are at least equal to the state maximum compressed tax rate, districts who receive the lowest amounts of M&O tax revenue per weighted student and districts with debt service tax rates near or equal to the greatest rates permitted by law.

The bill goes into effect during the 2016-2017 school year.



Legislature

School board meetings to be videotaped

Take note school boards serving large districts or charters: Everyone will be watching.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2016, an elected school district board of trustees and the governing body of a charter holder or open-enrollment charter school must make a video and audio recording of each regularly scheduled open meeting and then post a copy of those recordings on the Internet.

House Bill (HB) 283 applies to all ISDs or charter schools with a student enrollment of 10,000

students or more. The bill requires both a video and audio recording be made.

If the charter district or ISD maintains a website, the archived recording or an accessible link to the archived recording must be made available on that site within seven days after the recording was made. The archived recording must be maintained on the Internet for at least two years after the recording was first made available.

The archived recording does not replace the requirement to produce written minutes.



Legislature

Reading academies return for encore

Texas' once highly successful reading academies are returning for an encore performance.

Originally created in the 1990s, the reading academies fell victim to the state's budget cuts and changing priorities. Gov. Greg Abbott and many educators urged lawmakers to restore the academies. Restoring the reading academies was also a legislative priority for the Texas Education Agency.

Ultimately three bills – Senate Bill (SB) 925, SB 934, and SB 972 – were passed by the 84th Texas Legislature.

Two bills create math and literacy academies for teachers who provide instruction in kindergarten through third grade. The third bill creates reading to learn academies for teachers who provide instruction in fourth and fifth grade. The Texas Education Agency plans to offer the academies for the first time in summer 2016.

Here are brief descriptions of the bills:

SB 925

The commissioner must develop and make available literacy achievement academies for teachers who provide reading instruction to students in kindergarten and grades 1-3.

- A literacy achievement academy must include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Additionally, the academies must provide training in the use of empirically validated instructional methods that are appropriate for struggling readers. The academies are permitted to include training in effective instructional practices in writing.

SB 972

The commissioner must develop and make available reading-to-learn academies for teachers who provide reading comprehension instruction to students in grades 4-5.

- A reading-to-learn academy must include effective instructional practices that

promote student development of reading comprehension and inferential and critical thinking. Additionally, the academies must provide training in the use of empirically validated instructional methods that are appropriate for struggling readers. The academies are permitted to include material on writing instruction. The reading-to-learn academies must provide participating teachers with access to the academy training materials through the Internet after the teachers attend the academy.



SB 934

The commissioner must develop and make available mathematics achievement academies for teachers who provide mathematics instruction to students in kindergarten or grades 1-3.

- A mathematics achievement academy must include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in mathematics, including problem solving, the place value system, whole number operations, and fractions.

The legislation creating the reading and math academies requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selecting teachers who may attend an academy. The criteria must grant priority to teachers employed by a school district at a campus at which 50 percent or more of the students are educationally disadvantaged. The commissioner must also provide a process through which a teacher not employed at a campus with 50 percent or more educationally disadvantaged students may attend the academy, if there is space available, and the school district employing the teacher pays the costs of the teacher's attendance.

Teachers who attend an academy are entitled to receive a stipend in an amount to be determined by the commissioner from appropriated state funds.



Legislature

Legislature passes new guidelines for interventions

In the 2015 session, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1842, which provides a comprehensive update to interventions for districts and campuses, as well as guidelines for new open-enrollment charters.

The bill addresses required interventions for campuses that do not meet state accountability standards, most significantly by replacing reconstitution planning – which in current statute must take place after a campus receives two consecutive Improvement Required (IR) ratings – with a campus turnaround plan. Required elements of the campus turnaround plan include a detailed description of the academic programs to be offered at the campus; written comments from parents, teachers and a campus level committee; terms of the charter, should a district choose to turn the campus into an in-district charter; and a detailed description of the budget, staffing and financial resources required to implement the plan.

Additionally, HB 1842 requires the commissioner, after a campus does not meet state accountability

standards for five consecutive years, to either close the campus or put in place a board of managers to oversee operations of the entire district. Also, campuses that don't meet state accountability ratings must hold a public meeting to gather input from parents and community members for its targeted improvement plan, and if required, its campus turnaround plan.

The bill also creates the option for districts to be designated as innovation districts through the development of a local innovation plan with public input and school board approval. Being designated as an innovation district would allow a district to receive waivers from certain state requirements.

HB 1842 does not take the place of the charter revocation process laid out in Senate Bill (SB) 2, passed by the 83rd Texas Legislature in 2013.

TEA staff will begin implementing HB 1842 during the 2015-2016 school year.



84th Texas Legislative Session — Education-related Bills

Bill Number	Author	Sponsor	Description
Passed Bills			
HB 4	Huberty, Dan(R)	Campbell, Donna(R)	Relating to a high quality prekindergarten program provided by public school districts.
HB 10	Thompson, Senfronia(D)	Huffman, Joan(R)	Relating to certain criminal and civil consequences of trafficking of persons, compelling prostitution, and certain other related criminal offenses.
HB 18	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Perry, Charles(R)	Relating to college and career readiness training for certain public school counselors.
HB 77	Gonzalez, Mary(D)	West, Royce(D)	Relating to a study of the Dallas Men Against Abuse program.
HB 114	Flynn, Dan(R)	Hinojosa, Chuy(D)	Relating to the issuance of certain capital appreciation bonds by political subdivisions.
HB 181	Bell, Cecil(R)	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Relating to information printed by school districts on high school diplomas.
HB 218	Marquez, Marisa(D)	Rodriguez, Jose(D)	Relating to certification requirements for teachers in bilingual education.
HB 283	Fallon, Pat(R)	Creighton, Brandon(R)	Relating to the requirement that certain governmental bodies make audio and video recordings of open meetings available on the Internet.
HB 440	Gonzales, Larry(R)	Watson, Kirk(D)	Relating to adapting the public school physical education curriculum to accommodate the needs of students with mental disabilities.
HB 505	Rodriguez, Eddie(D)	Estes, Craig(R)	Relating to a prohibition of limitations on the number of dual credit courses or hours in which a public high school student may enroll.
HB 679	Turner, Sylvester(D)	Zaffirini, Judith(D)	Relating to a study on homeless youth.
HB 731	Lucio III, Eddie(D)	Lucio, Eddie(D)	Relating to participation of certain school districts in the three-year high school diploma plan pilot program.
HB 743	Huberty, Dan(R)	Seliger, Kel(R)	Relating to the essential knowledge and skills of the required public school curriculum and to certain state-adopted or state-developed assessment instruments for public school students.
HB 744	Huberty, Dan(R)	Creighton, Brandon(R)	Relating to the purchase of certain insurance by public school districts.
HB 771	Deshotel, Joe(D)	Creighton, Brandon(R)	Relating to funding for the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities.
HB 1164	VanDeaver, Gary(R)	Garcia, Sylvia(D)	Relating to the assessment of public school students in writing and English language arts.
HB 1170	Farney, Marsha(R)	Lucio, Eddie(D)	Relating to the applicability to open-enrollment charter schools of certain laws regarding local governments and political subdivisions.
HB 1171	Farney, Marsha(R)	Lucio, Eddie(D)	Relating to the applicability of certain immunity and liability laws to open-enrollment charter schools.
HB 1300	Capriglione, Giovanni(R)	Seliger, Kel(R)	Relating to the required qualifications of persons admitted to educator preparation programs.
HB 1305	Bonnen, Greg(R)	Taylor, Larry(R)	Relating to a program to provide a free or reduced-price breakfast to eligible students attending a public school and the method of determining the number of educationally disadvantaged students.

◆ See [Legislative Bills](#), page 19



Legislative Bills *continued*

Bill Number	Author	Sponsor	Description
HB 1378	Flynn, Dan(R)	Bettencourt, Paul(R)	Relating to annual financial reporting of debt information.
HB 1430	King, Susan(R)	Zaffirini, Judith(D)	Relating to the inclusion of mental health in the public services endorsement on a public school diploma and in information about health science career pathways.
HB 1431	King, Susan(R)	Lucio, Eddie(D)	Relating to the development of a career-oriented foreign language program that public schools may offer.
HB 1474	VanDeaver, Gary(R)	Eltife, Kevin(R)	Relating to the placement of money in the state instructional materials fund for public schools to use to purchase instructional materials.
HB 1551	Howard, Donna(D)	Hancock, Kelly(R)	Relating to money distributed by the School Land Board to the available school fund or to the State Board of Education for investment in the permanent school fund.
HB 1559	Parker, Tan(R)	Taylor, Larry(R)	Relating to public school Internet website information concerning local programs and services available to assist homeless students.
HB 1613	Guillen, Ryan(D)	Perry, Charles(R)	Relating to the use of performance on certain assessment instruments designated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to satisfy requirements concerning high school end-of-course assessment.
HB 1706	VanDeaver, Gary(R)	Burton, Konni(R)	Relating to reducing paperwork and duplicate reports required of a school district.
HB 1783	Moody, Joe(D)	Menendez, Jose(D)	Relating to the right of a school employee to report a crime and persons subject to the prohibition on coercing another into suppressing or failing to report information to a law enforcement agency.
HB 1786	Dutton, Harold(D)	Campbell, Donna(R)	Relating to the transfer of driver and traffic safety education from the Texas Education Agency to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.
HB 1804	Naishtat, Elliott(D)	West, Royce(D)	Relating to notice by campuses and open-enrollment charter schools about events that may significantly impact the education of certain foster children.
HB 1807	Naishtat, Elliott(D)	Zaffirini, Judith(D)	Relating to requiring the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to maintain an inventory of postsecondary educational programs and services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
HB 1842	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Taylor, Larry(R)	Relating to the assessment of intervention in and sanction of a public school that does not satisfy accreditation criteria.
HB 1992	Zerwas, John(R)	Seliger, Kel(R)	Relating to the granting of undergraduate course credit by advanced placement examination at public institutions of higher education.
HB 1993	Sheffield, J.D.(R)	Taylor, Van(R)	Relating to the authorization of independent school districts to use electronic means to notify parents of a student's academic performance.
HB 2014	Sheets, Kenneth(R)	Taylor, Van(R)	Relating to the authority of military personnel to obtain certification to teach career and technology education classes in public schools.

◆ See **Legislative Bills**, page 20



Legislative Bills *continued*

Bill Number	Author	Sponsor	Description
HB 2025	Gonzales, Larry(R)	Schwertner, Charles(R)	Relating to participation of certain school districts in the three-year high school diploma plan pilot program.
HB 2186	Cook, Byron(R)	Campbell, Donna(R)	Relating to suicide prevention training for certain educators and other employees of a school district.
HB 2205	Crownover, Myra(R)	Seliger, Kel(R)	Relating to educator preparation programs, including the appointment of a member of the State Board for Educator Certification with experience and knowledge of alternative educator preparation programs.
HB 2251	Anchia, Rafael(D)	Hancock, Kelly(R)	Relating to an established schedule of payments from the foundation school fund of the yearly entitlement of certain open-enrollment charter schools.
HB 2293	Darby, Drew(R)	West, Royce(D)	Relating to the certification by the comptroller to the commissioner of education of the taxable value of property in each school district.
HB 2349	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Relating to public school assessment, performance standards, and course requirements.
HB 2398	White, James(R)	Whitmire, John(D)	Relating to the establishment of judicial donation trust funds to assist needy children and families appearing before justice and municipal courts.
HB 2593	Price, Four(R)	Seliger, Kel(R)	Relating to the method of determining the average daily attendance in certain school districts.
HB 2610	King, Ken(R)	Taylor, Larry(R)	Relating to the minimum number of minutes of instruction for students to be provided by public school districts and the scheduling of the last day of school for students by public school districts.
HB 2628	Clardy, Travis(R)	Garcia, Sylvia(D)	Relating to the development and alignment by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of curricula for certain educational programs.
HB 2660	Howard, Donna(D)	Watson, Kirk(D)	Relating to Foundation School Program funding for students enrolled in an optional flexible school day program.
HB 2684	Giddings, Helen(D)	Whitmire, John(D)	Relating to the creation of a model training curriculum and to the required training for school district peace officers and school resource officers.
HB 2708	Coleman, Garnet(D)	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Relating to the qualifications for teaching a driver education course.
HB 2804	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Taylor, Larry(R)	Relating to assessment of public school students and evaluation of public school performance.
HB 2812	Springer, Drew(R)	Taylor, Van(R)	Relating to the limit on junior college courses that a high school student may enroll in for dual credit.
HB 2851	Parker, Tan(R)	Taylor, Van(R)	Relating to the immunities of a non-profit corporation created for the purpose of aiding open-enrollment charter schools in providing educational facilities.
HB 3062	Clardy, Travis(R)	West, Royce(D)	Relating to the participation of an independent school district in the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program.
HB 3106	Huberty, Dan(R)	Creighton, Brandon(R)	Relating to the period of time allowed for appointment of a board of managers for a school district.

◆ See Legislative Bills, page 21



Legislative Bills *continued*

Bill Number	Author	Sponsor	Description
HB 3123	Price, Four(R)	Nelson, Jane(R)	Relating to governmental entities subject to the sunset review process.
HB 3357	Lucio III, Eddie(D)	Eltife, Kevin(R)	Relating to permitted methods for certain political subdivisions to post notice of a meeting.
HB 3562	Thompson, Senfronia(D)	Rodriguez, Jose(D)	Relating to the adoption of a policy allowing a grace period after the exhaustion of the balance of a meal card or account used by students to purchase meals in public schools.
HB 3748	Farney, Marsha(R)	West, Royce(D)	Relating to the coordination of educational support services for and information regarding students who are currently or were formerly placed in foster care.
HB 3987	Farney, Marsha(R)	Garcia, Sylvia(D)	Relating to programs in public schools designed to facilitate planning and saving for higher education and facilitate personal financial literacy instruction.
HB 4046	Alvarado, Carol(D)	Ellis, Rodney(D)	Relating to confidentiality of student records.
SB 1	Nelson, Jane(R)	Bonnen, Dennis(R)	Relating to certain restrictions on the imposition of ad valorem taxes and to the duty of the state to reimburse certain political subdivisions for certain revenue loss.
SB 66	Hinojosa, Chuy(D)	Crownover, Myra(R)	Relating to the use of epinephrine auto-injectors on public and open-enrollment charter school campuses and at off-campus school-sanctioned events.
SB 97	Hinojosa, Chuy(D)	Alvarado, Carol(D)	Relating to regulation of the sale, distribution, possession, use, and advertising of e-cigarettes, cigarettes, and tobacco products; amending provisions subject to a criminal penalty.
SB 107	Whitmire, John(D)	Thompson, Senfronia(D)	Relating to the removal, discipline, or transfer of a public school student.
SB 108	Whitmire, John(D)	Thompson, Senfronia(D)	Relating to criminal procedures for certain misdemeanor offenses committed by children.
SB 133	Schwertner, Charles(R)	Coleman, Garnet(D)	Relating to mental health first aid training for school district employees and school resource officers.
SB 149	Seliger, Kel(R)	Huberty, Dan(R)	Relating to the creation of individual graduation committees for certain high school students.
SB 168	Uresti, Carlos(D)	Farias, Joe(D)	Relating to temporary waiver of superintendent certification for employment of public school district superintendents.
SB 208	Campbell, Donna(R)	Burkett, Cindy(R)	Relating to the continuation and functions of the Texas Workforce Commission
SB 265	Ellis, Rodney(D)	Davis, Sarah(R)	Relating to student use of sunscreen products in public schools.
SB 382	Uresti, Carlos(D)	Huberty, Dan(R)	Relating to public school educator continuing education credit for instruction on the use of an automated external defibrillator.
SB 453	Seliger, Kel(R)	Clardy, Travis(R)	Relating to minimum scores required for public school students to receive credit by an examination administered through the College-Level Examination Program.
SB 507	Lucio, Eddie(D)	Thompson, Senfronia(D)	Relating to the placement of video cameras in self-contained classrooms providing special education services.

◆ See **Legislative Bills**, page 22



Legislative Bills *continued*

Bill Number	Author	Sponsor	Description
SB 674	Campbell, Donna(R)	Coleman, Garnet(D)	Relating to instruction regarding mental health, substance abuse, and youth suicide in educator training programs.
SB 724	Perry, Charles(R)	Craddick, Tom(R)	Relating to the motor vehicle sales tax applicable to motor vehicles used by transportation companies for certain purposes.
SB 733	Fraser, Troy(R)	Workman, Paul(R)	Relating to the authority of certain political subdivisions to change the date of their general elections.
SB 807	Campbell, Donna(R)	Sheets, Kenneth(R)	Relating to occupational license application and examination fees for certain military service members, military veterans, and military spouses.
SB 810	Seliger, Kel(R)	Smithee, John(R)	Relating to the authority of an independent school district to contract with a municipality for the design, improvement, or construction of an instructional facility, stadium, or other athletic facility.
SB 925	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Relating to providing training academies for public school teachers who provide reading instruction to students in kindergarten through grade three.
SB 934	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Farney, Marsha(R)	Relating to providing training academies for public school teachers who provide mathematics instruction to students in kindergarten through grade three.
SB 935	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Deshotel, Joe(D)	Relating to the establishment of reading excellence teams.
SB 955	Schwertner, Charles(R)	Miller, Rick(R)	Relating to permissible locations for open-enrollment charter schools created by institutions of higher education.
SB 968	West, Royce(D)	Naishtat, Elliott(D)	Relating to a prescription drug misuse awareness component of the health curriculum used in public schools.
SB 972	Kolkhorst, Lois(R)	Deshotel, Joe(D)	Relating to training academies for public school teachers who provide reading comprehension instruction to students in grades four and five.
SB 996	Taylor, Van(R)	Villalba, Jason(R)	Relating to notifying a parent or guardian whether an employee of a school is appointed school marshal and the confidentiality of information submitted to or collected by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.
SB 1004	Bettencourt, Paul(R)	Thompson, Senfronia(D)	Relating to the school district students to whom certain public junior colleges may offer certain courses and programs.
SB 1024	Seliger, Kel(R)	White, James(R)	Relating to eligibility for course credit and high school diplomas of students enrolled in educational programs provided by the Windham School District in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
SB 1204	Rodriguez, Jose(D)	Marquez, Marisa(D)	Relating to a waiver of fees by the Department of Agriculture and the Parks and Wildlife Department for certain educational programs involving aquaculture and hydroponics.
SB 1259	Rodriguez, Jose(D)	Allen, Alma(D)	Relating to the committee developing a student's individualized education plan, the written report of the committee, and a regular education teacher's opportunity for input.

◆ See **Legislative Bills**, page 23



Legislative Bills *continued*

Bill Number	Author	Sponsor	Description
SB 1307	Menendez, Jose(D)	King, Susan(R)	Relating to occupational licenses for military service members, military veterans, and military spouses.
SB 1309	Menendez, Jose(D)	Deshotel, Joe(D)	Relating to eligibility requirements for issuance of a teaching certificate to an applicant who holds a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor teaching certification.
SB 1494	Uresti, Carlos(D)	Turner, Chris(D)	Relating to the educational needs of homeless students.
SB 1580	Garcia, Sylvia(D)	Turner, Sylvester(D)	Relating to studies on homeless veterans and youth.
SB 1703	Huffman, Joan(R)	Laubenberg, Jodie(R)	Relating to the deadlines for certain processes and procedures involving an election.
SB 1776	Menendez, Jose(D)	Guillen, Ryan(D)	Relating to the exemption from the assessment requirements of the Texas Success Initiative for students who successfully complete certain college preparatory courses.
SB 1867	Zaffirini, Judith(D)	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Relating to excluding certain adult students receiving special education services from computation of dropout and completion rates for purposes of public school accountability.
SB 2062	Watson, Kirk(D)	Farney, Marsha(R)	Relating to authorizing certain charter holders to provide combined services for certain adult and high school dropout recovery programs.
SJR 1	Nelson, Jane(R)	Bonnen, Dennis(R)	Proposing a constitutional amendment providing for an exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes of a portion of the market value of a residence homestead based on the median market value.
Vetoed Bills			
HB 2826	Murphy, Jim(R)	Huffman, Joan(R)	Relating to the eligibility of property located in more than one school district for a limitation on appraised value for school district maintenance and operations ad valorem tax purposes under the Texas Economic Development Act.
HB 3736	Davis, Sarah(R)	Huffman, Joan(R)	Relating to conflicts of interest by members of state agency governing boards.
SB 313	Seliger, Kel(R)	Aycock, Jimmie Don(R)	Relating to review and modification of the essential knowledge and skills of the required public school curriculum.
SB 496	Watson, Kirk(D)	Howard, Donna(D)	Relating to Foundation School Program funding for students enrolled in an optional flexible school day program.



SBOE

Summaries of SBOE actions can be found online

The State Board of Education met July 14 – 17, 2015. Summaries of actions taken by the SBOE can be found on the Texas Education Agency's website at tea.texas.gov/sboe/actions/.



For a number of years, Texas public schools were not allowed to begin school before the fourth Monday in August. This year, House Bill 2610 made additional changes to the school year. Rather than requiring students to attend school for 180 days as

previously required, this legislation says districts must provide 75,600 minutes of instruction. The bill also prohibits districts from scheduling the last day of school for students before May 15, effective with the 2015-2016 school year.



Texas Education Today may be found online at tea.texas.gov/communications/tet.aspx.

State Board of Education



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Barbara Cargill, The Woodlands

District 10

Tom Maynard, Florence

District 11

Patricia Hardy, Fort Worth

Secretary, District 2

Ruben Cortez, Jr., Brownsville

District 12

Geraldine Miller, Dallas

District 13

Erika Beltran, Dallas

District 14

Sue Melton-Malone, Waco

District 15

Marty Rowley, Amarillo

