

84th Legislative Session

Final Bill Report 2015



Texas Association of School Administrators

CATEGORICAL INDEX

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Disclaimer:

This document is for informational purposes only. It is intended to provide superintendents and administrators with brief summaries of school-related legislation passed during the regular session of the 84th Legislature. This document is not intended to be a substitute for legal advice. Specific questions and circumstances regarding a bill's impact on a school district should be individually discussed with the district's attorney.

EDUCATION-RELATED LEGISLATION THAT FAILED PASSAGE

- vouchers/tax credit-scholarships
- opportunity school districts/local control districts/parent trigger bills that would have taken power away from school boards
- extensive local debt information required on bond ballots
- school finance reform
- funding for TRS pension surcharge (1.5 percent total payroll)
- flexibility in moving the start date back
- reduction in the number of state assessments in grades 3-8
- elimination of state-mandated writing assessments
- home schooled student participation in UIL activities

EDUCATION-RELATED LEGISLATION VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR

- **SB 313** – would have required the SBOE to review and narrow the scope of the TEKS and allow front-loading of IMA funding in the first year of the biennium. It also would have prohibited the SBOE from adopting a proclamation in which the total cost of the materials would exceed 75 percent of the total amount used to fund the IMA. However, HB 1474, passed and signed by the governor, makes the annual IMA funding a biennial allotment, allowing districts to frontload the use of IMA funding during the first year of the biennium.
- **SB 496** – would have provided funding for an Optional Flexible School Day (OFSD) among other things. However, HB 2660, passed and signed by the governor, includes the same OFSD funding language contained in SB 496.

EDUCATION-RELATED HOUSE BILLS PASSED

ACCOUNTABILITY

HB 18

Aycock

Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Results to be Shared with School Districts

Other provisions listed under Curriculum (page 33), Staff Development (page 57), and the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium (page 68).

Requires an institution of higher education that administers a TSI test to report to each school district from which assessed students graduated all available information on student scores and performance on the TSI, including student demographic information. Mandates the THECB to adopt rules as necessary to implement these provisions in a manner that complies with various state and federal laws regarding confidentiality or privacy of student information.

Applies beginning with TSI tests administered to entering undergraduate students for the fall 2016 semester.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1842

Aycock

Innovation Zones, Monitoring Reviews, Special Accreditation Visits, Campus Intervention Teams, Campus Turnaround, Student Trustees

Due to the dense content of HB 1842, the bill is divided into sections by topic. (Other provisions listed under Charter Schools on page 32.)

Innovation Zones

Establishes innovation zone designations to allow campuses to develop local initiatives to improve educational outcomes. Allows consideration of such designations to be initiated by board resolution or by a petition signed by a majority of a district-level committee. Outlines other aspects of the process and procedures for innovation designation.

Establishes eligibility for participation that requires a school district’s most recent performance rating to be at least “acceptable.” Requires a district’s local innovation plan to include innovative curriculum, instructional methods, and provisions regarding community participation, campus governance, and parental involvement. Allows exemption from certain state laws, similar to flexibility provided to charter schools. Limits a campus designation as an innovation zone to no more than five years. Addresses

amendment, rescission, renewal, and terminations by the commissioner and allows the commissioner to adopt rules.

Monitoring Reviews

Replaces the term “on-site investigations” with the term “monitoring reviews,” and aligns corresponding terminology. Expands the commissioner’s authority to determine the frequency of monitoring reviews based on a variety of factors. Allows TEA to obtain information from administrators, other district employees, parents, and other persons as necessary, and requires the commissioner to adopt rules on how the information may be obtained. Applies these changes to the Texas School for the Deaf and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Permits a monitoring review to include desk reviews and on-site visits. Allows the commissioner to convert a monitoring review to a special accreditation investigation on prompt notification to the district of the conversion.

Special Accreditation Visits

Requires TEA to adopt written procedures for conducting special accreditation visits, including procedures that allow TEA to obtain information from employees in a manner that prevents a district or campus from screening the information. Mandates the procedures be available on TEA’s website. Allows the commissioner to impose interventions and sanctions on the basis of a special accreditation visit.

Campus Intervention Team

Requires a campus intervention team to conduct a public meeting at the campus with the principal, the campus-level planning and decision-making committee, parents, and community members to review the campus performance rating and solicit input for the development of the targeted improvement plan. Mandates that the team provide written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting to parents and post notice on the campus website.

Campus Turnaround

Replaces the terminology “reconstitution” and “repurposing” with the terms “campus turnaround plan,” “board of managers,” “alternative management,” and “closure.”

Requires, after two years of unacceptable performance, the commissioner to order the campus to prepare and submit a campus turnaround plan. Outlines parties that must help in preparing the plan and the required notice to stakeholders. Mandates that the plan include details on the method for restructuring, reforming, or reconstituting the campus. Allows the district to request help with the plan from a regional education service center or institution of higher education.

Requires the turnaround plan to take effect not later than the school year following the third consecutive year that the campus has received an academically unacceptable performance.

Mandates that if the commissioner determines that the campus will not satisfy all student performance standards in a specified time period, the commissioner must order appointment of a board of managers, alternative management, or closure.

Mandates that if a campus receives unacceptable ratings for three consecutive years after the order to submit a turnaround plan, the commissioner must order appointment of a board of managers or closure of the campus.

Provides specific criteria for repurposing a campus after the commissioner orders closure. Addresses issues related to a board of managers and alternative management.

Requires the Legislative Budget Board to publish a report evaluating the implementation of these changes, including an analysis of whether the changes resulted in improvements to school and student performance.

Applies beginning with the academic performance ratings issued with the 2015-16 school year.

Student Trustees for Certain Districts

Establishes a bracketed school district in which the school board may adopt a resolution that creates a non-voting student trustee position if the district has a campus subject to a turnaround plan. Provides that an eligible district have a central administrative office in a county with a population of more than 2 million, with student enrollment between 125,000 and 200,000.

Mandates the board adopt a policy that establishes the term, selection procedures, and removal procedures of a student trustee. Requires the board to also adopt policy regarding student trustee participation in board deliberations and access to information and records consistent with FERPA. Allows a student trustee to earn not more than one academic course credit in a subject area determined by the district.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2804

Aycock

Accountability System Redesign, Campus/District A-F Ratings, etc.

Due to the dense content of HB 2804 the bill is divided into sections by topic. (Other provisions listed under Texas High Performance Schools Consortium on page 68.)

Accountability System Redesign

Replaces the four indices used to rate public schools with five weighted domains that include new indicators of achievement.

Requires the commissioner to adopt a set of indicators of the quality of learning and achievement that measure and evaluate school districts and campuses with respect to improvements in student preparedness for subsequent grade levels and the workforce, reduction of differentials in student academic achievement levels, and information shared with parents and the community regarding performance in the five domains. Requires that performance on the indicators be compared to state standards defined annually by the commissioner.

First Domain

Mandates the first domain be based solely on various state test results.

Second and Third Domains

Requires the second and third domains to be based on student growth and closing gaps between student groups. Mandates that the *first through third* domains account for 55 percent of the performance evaluation rating.

Fourth Domain

Mandates that the fourth domain evaluation be divided into three categories.

Establishes high school campuses and school districts that include high school campuses as the first category. Requires the high-school-related evaluation to consist of non-test measures, such as rates for dropout and completion, and high school graduation. Adds other non-test measures to consider such as percentage of students who satisfy Texas Success Initiative college readiness benchmarks, earn industry certifications, enlist in the military, take AP courses, and other specified items.

Establishes elementary school as well as middle and junior high school campuses as the second category of evaluation. Requires the second category to include student attendance. Mandates that for middle and junior high school campuses other considerations include dropout rates and percentage of students in grades 7 or 8 who receive instruction in preparing for high school, college, and a career as specified in the bill.

Establishes the third category to include any additional indicators of student achievement not associated with STAAR performance determined appropriate for consideration by the commissioner in consultation with educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers.

Assigns a weight of 35 percent of the performance evaluation to the fourth domain. Mandates that for high school campuses and districts that include those campuses, 10 percent of the evaluation be attributed to the high school graduation rate indicator and 25 percent to the remaining applicable indicators.

Fifth Domain

Assigns a weight of 10 percent of the performance evaluation to the fifth domain to measure parent and student engagement (part of the accountability system introduced in HB 5, 83rd Legislature) based on a district-selected subset of three programs or specific categories of performance. Requires districts and campuses, before the beginning of each school year, to post on their websites and report to TEA the three community and student engagement categories or programs they have selected for use in the state accountability ratings. Mandates the criteria that districts used to evaluate performance and the actual letter ratings that were then assigned to each of the three subsets also be posted on the districts' websites and reported to TEA.

Campus/District A-F Rating Implementation

Requires the commissioner to assign a temporary performance rating, which has yet to be determined, to each district and campus not later than August 15, 2016.

Requires the commissioner, beginning with the 2017-18 school year, to assign each district and campus an overall performance rating based on an A-F scale. Mandates that the commissioner also assign to each district and campus a separate letter grade for each of the five domains. Requires the letter rating to be assigned by August 15 of each year thereafter.

Note: Under HB 5, 83rd Legislature, the A-F district ratings were to begin in 2016-17. HB 2804 pushed back implementation to 2017-18.

States that a letter rating of A, B, or C is considered acceptable, and a rating of D or F is considered unacceptable. Prevents districts from receiving an overall or domain rating of A if *any campus* in the district has received a corresponding domain or overall letter grade of D or F.

Commissioner Rules Regarding Domain Ratings

Requires the commissioner, by rule, to adopt procedures to ensure that a repeated performance rating of D or F or unacceptable in one domain is reflected in the overall performance rating of a district or campus and is not compensated for by a rating of A, B, or C in another domain.

Evaluation of Dropout Recovery Schools

Revises evaluation of dropout recovery schools under the new accountability procedures adopted by the commissioner to use only the best results of a state test or any retake of a state test within the same school year. Allows only a student enrolled continuously for at least 90 days at a campus during a school year to be considered in a dropout recovery school's evaluation.

New Accountability/Assessment Commission and the THPSC

Requires the establishment of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability to develop and make recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public school accountability. Mandates the commission be composed of 15 members (including an educator in a school district that participates in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium [THPSC]), including 10 members appointed: by the governor (four), the lieutenant governor (three), and the speaker of the House (three). Requires the commission to deliver its report that recommends statutory changes to the governor and Legislature by September 1, 2016. Mandates that the commission consider the THPSC's recommendations related to innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems when preparing the commission's report. Abolishes the commission January 1, 2017.

Applies this section with the effective date of this bill (immediately).

Alignment of New Language

Modifies other statutory language as necessary to refer to the amended provisions and reflect the changes, e.g., references to “student achievement indicators” are changed to “achievement indicators” or “academic achievement indicators.”

Repeals

Repeals current Education Code Sections 39.053(e) and 39.054(b), (d), (d-1) related to “required improvement” and “85 percent” provisions as well as the commissioner’s ability to consider alternative performance criteria under special circumstances.

Commissioner Deadlines

Requires the commissioner to adopt the new set of indicators not later than December 1, 2016.

Requires the commissioner, not later than January 1, 2017, to submit a report to specified members of the Legislature that includes information on:

1. The ratings that each school district and campus would have received for the first through fourth domains for the 2015-16 school year if the indicators existed during that school year.
2. Correlations between each letter performance rating the district or campus would have received and the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and are students of limited English proficiency. Also requires the report to include percentages of students at each campus and district disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Applies beginning with the 2017-18 school year except as otherwise provided in the bill.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 3106

Huberty

Appointment of a Board of Managers for a School District

Also listed under Administration/Operations (page 18).

Allows the commissioner of education to extend the authority of a board of managers, if, before the second anniversary of the date the managers were appointed, the commissioner determines, after receiving local feedback, that insufficient progress has been made toward improving the academic or financial performance of the district.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 149
Seliger
Individual Graduation Committees for Certain Students

Also listed under Assessment (pages 24-26).

Applies to a grade 11 or 12 student who has failed to comply with the EOC performance requirements for not more than two courses. Requires a district to establish an individual graduation committee (IGC) for each qualifying student at the end of or after the student's 11th grade year to determine whether the student may qualify to graduate.

Mandates the IGC be composed of several specified parties: the principal or designee; the teacher of each course for which the student failed to perform satisfactorily on the EOC and the department chair or lead teacher supervising that teacher; and as applicable, the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, or a designated advocate if the parent or person standing in parental relation is unable to serve, or the student, at the student's option, if the student is at least 18 years old or is an emancipated minor. Requires the school district to provide an appropriate translator for a person who is unable to speak English. Requires the commissioner to establish procedures for appointing an alternative member, if necessary, except that districts must establish such procedures for the 2014-15 school year.

Requires the superintendent to establish procedures for convening an IGC. Mandates that the district ensure a good faith effort to a timely notification of the parent or other appropriate person of the time, place, and purpose of the IGC meeting. Requires the notice to be clear and easy to understand, given in person or by mail, and in English, Spanish, or, to the extent practicable, the recipient's native language.

Establishes eligibility requirements for graduation that include a student's successful completion of the curriculum requirements identified by the SBOE under Texas Education Code, Section 28.025(a) (requirements for the Foundation High School Program) or as otherwise provided by the transition plan adopted by the commissioner under 28.025(h)(transition plan for replacing the Minimum, Recommended, and Advanced graduation programs). Mandates that the student's IGC recommend additional requirements by which a student may qualify to graduate, including remediation, and for each EOC on which the student fails to perform satisfactorily, completion of a project or preparation of a portfolio of work samples that demonstrate proficiency in the subject area. Allows a student to submit coursework previously completed to satisfy a recommended additional requirement.

Requires the IGC, in determining whether a student is qualified to graduate, to consider the following 15 items or categories of information about the student:

1. recommendation of the teacher of the pertinent course
2. grade of the pertinent course
3. score on each EOC on which the student failed to perform satisfactorily
4. performance on any additional IGC-recommended requirements

5. number of hours of remediation attended by the student, including a college preparatory course or transitional college course in reading or math
6. school attendance rate
7. satisfaction of any Texas Success Initiative college benchmarks.
8. successful completion of a dual-credit course in English, math, science, or social studies
9. successful completion of a pre-AP, AP, or IB program course in English, math, science, or social studies
10. rating of “advanced high” on most recent TELPAS
11. score of 50 or greater on a CLEP exam
12. score on ACT, SAT, or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test
13. completion of a sequence of CTE courses needed to attain an industry-recognized credential or certificate
14. overall preparedness for postsecondary success
15. other academic information designated for consideration by the IGC

Provides that after considering these criteria, the IGC may determine that the student is qualified to graduate. Mandates that a student for whom an IGC is established may graduate and receive a high school diploma only if the student successfully completes all *additional* requirements recommended by the IGC, meets the curriculum requirements, and the IGC’s vote is unanimous.

Requires the commissioner to establish, by rule, a timeline for making a determination. (Districts must establish the timelines for the 2014-15 school year.) Establishes that these provisions do not create a property interest in graduation, and the IGC’s decision is final and may not be appealed.

Requires that, notwithstanding any action taken by an IGC, a district must administer an EOC exam to any student who fails to perform satisfactorily as provided by Section 39.025(b) (education code that allows a student to retake an EOC exam if the student did not achieve satisfactory performance on it). States that for purposes of Section 39.053(c)(education code that allows a student to earn a diploma after successfully retaking an EOC), this is considered an assessment required for graduation retaken by a student.

Adds a requirement that each school district report through PEIMS the number of students each school year for whom an IGC is established and the number awarded diplomas based on IGC decisions. Requires a district to report the information by December 1 of the school year following the year the student is awarded a diploma. Mandates that TEA include this information on its website.

Provides that a student who, after retaking an EOC exam for Algebra I or English II, has failed to perform satisfactorily, but who receives a proficient score on the Texas Success Initiative exam for that subject, satisfies the EOC requirement.

States that an open-enrollment charter school is subject to the same IGC requirements as other public schools.

Requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement these provisions by the 2015-16 school year. Provides that these provisions expire September 1, 2017, except that reporting requirements expire September 1, 2018.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 1867

Zaffirini

Adult Students Receiving Special Education Services and Completion Rates

Requires the commissioner, in computing completion rates, to exclude students who are at least 18 years of age as of September 1 of the school year as reported for the fall semester PEIMS submission and have satisfied the credit requirements for high school graduation, have not completed their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and are enrolled and receiving IEP services.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

ADMINISTRATION/OPERATIONS

HB 23

Davis, Sarah

Disclosure of Relationships with Local Government Officers and Vendors

Makes substantial changes to provisions in the Local Government Code, including amending the terms “agent,” “family member,” “local government entity,” and “local government officer,” and adds new definitions for the terms “family relationship,” “gift,” and “vendor.”

Provides that the reporting requirements apply to a vendor and local government officer. Reduces the aggregate value of gifts that would trigger a reporting requirement from \$250 to \$100 during a 12-month period. Requires the filing of a vendor questionnaire if a person is both a local government officer and a vendor of a local governmental entity.

Requires the records administrator to maintain a list of officers of the local governmental entity and to make the list available to the public and any vendor who may be required to file a conflict of interest questionnaire.

Provides enforcement provisions and criminal penalties if a local government officer and vendor knowingly fail to comply with the reporting requirements.

Repeals certain provisions in the Local Government Code. Requires the Texas Ethics Commission to adopt forms.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 283

Fallon

Online Posting and Recording of Audio/Video of Open Meetings

Requires a school district that has an enrollment of 10,000 or more students to: (1) make a video and audio recording of reasonable quality of each regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or special called meeting and (2) make an archived copy of the video and audio recording available on the Internet. Allows the school district to make available the archived copy on an existing website, including a video-sharing or social networking site, rather than establishing a separate website. Requires a school district that maintains a website to make available, in a conspicuous manner, the archived recording of each meeting or an accessible link to the archived recording. Requires the school district to make the archived recording of the meeting available online no later than seven days after the date of the recording was made and maintain the archived recording for not less than two years after it was first made available. Exempts the school district from posting the archived recording online if there is a catastrophe or technical breakdown. Provides that a school district must make all reasonable efforts to make the required recording available in a timely manner. Allows a school district to broadcast a regularly scheduled meeting on television.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

HB 484

Capriglione

Eligibility of a Person for Certain Public Elective Offices

Requires that a person who is a candidate or elected or appointed to a public elective office be registered to vote in the territory from which the office is elected. Requires that an elected officer be a registered voter.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 685

Sheets

Public Information Act Request Online Referrals

Provides that a public information officer complies with the Public Information Act's production requirements by referring a requestor to an exact Internet location or URL address on a website maintained by the political subdivision and accessible to the public,

if the requested information is identifiable and readily available on the website. If the person requesting the information prefers receiving it in a manner other than access through the URL, the political subdivision must supply the information in the manner prescribed in Texas Government Code Section 552.221(b). If a public information officer provides an Internet location or URL by email, the email must contain a statement in a conspicuous font that clearly indicates that the requestor may access the requested information by inspection, duplication, or by receipt by mail.

Changes in law made by this Act only apply to an information request that is received on or after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 744

Huberty

Purchase of Bodily Injury Insurance by School Districts

Allows school districts to obtain insurance against bodily injuries sustained by students while training or engaging in interschool athletic competition or while engaging in school-sponsored activities on *or* off a school campus.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 786

Walle

Right of a Public Employee to Breastfeed

Requires school districts and other public employers to allow employees to express breast milk at the workplace. Requires school districts to develop a written policy that states that the district supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for employees. Requires school districts to provide a reasonable amount of break time for these employees as needed. Districts must provide a private place (other than a multiple user bathroom) that is shielded from view and free from intrusion. Prohibits school districts from suspending, terminating, or discriminating against an employee for asserting the right to express breast milk. Provides that this law does not create a cause of action against a school district.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1305
Bonnen, Greg
Reduced-price Breakfast Program

Allows school boards to either participate in the National School Breakfast Program or develop and implement a locally funded program to provide free meals, including breakfast and lunch, to each student eligible for reduced-priced meals under federal law. The reduced price cannot exceed the maximum allowable rate under federal law. Provides that a school district may participate in the national program at one or more campuses in the district and provide a locally funded program at one or more other campuses in the district.

Provides that the number of educationally disadvantaged students for purposes of the compensatory education allotment is determined by averaging the best six months' numbers of students eligible for enrollment in the national school lunch program for the preceding year. A student receiving a full-time virtual education through the state virtual school network may be included in determining the number of educationally disadvantaged students if the district submits and the commissioner approves the district's plan detailing enhanced services that will be provided to the students.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2027
Bonnen, Greg
Establishing Precincts for Elections Held on a Uniform Election Date

Provides that the county election precincts are the election precincts for an election held by a political subdivision on a uniform election date, except for: (1) an election held on the May uniform election date that conducts early voting by personal appearance at 75 percent or more of its permanent or temporary branch polling on the same days and during the same hours as voting is conducted at the main early voting place; and (2) at each remaining polling place for at least two consecutive days of voting during the early voting period and for at least eight hours on each of the two consecutive days; or (3) has not established a permanent or temporary branch early voting polling place.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2134
Burkett
Emailed Public Information Requests

Allows a public information request sent via email to be considered withdrawn if the governmental body, public information officer, or agent sends a request for clarification,

additional information, or discussion by email to the same address from which the original request was sent or to another email address provided by the requestor, and no written or email response is received within the required time period.

Changes in law made by this Act apply only to an information request that is received on or after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2610
King, Ken
Minutes of Instruction

Requires each school district to provide 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses. Allows a school district to add additional minutes to the end of the district's normal school hours as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity. Allows the commissioner to adopt rules for the application, on the basis of the minimum minutes of instruction, for any provision that refers to the minimum number of days. Provides that a reference to a day of instruction means 420 minutes of instruction. Prohibits a school district from scheduling the last day of school before May 15.

Allows a school district that does not offer each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 and whose prospective or former students generally attend school in another state for the grade levels the district does not offer to schedule the last day of school after May 15 or the law of another state.

Provides that the minimum number of instructional minutes applies with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 3106
Huberty
Extension of Board of Managers' Authority

Also listed under Accountability (page 11).

Allows the commissioner of education to extend the authority of a board of managers, if, before the second anniversary of the date the managers were appointed, the commissioner determines, after receiving local feedback, that insufficient progress has been made toward improving the academic or financial performance of the district.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 3357
Lucio III, Eddie
Permitted Methods for Certain Political Subdivisions to Post Meeting Notices

Allows school districts that extend into four or more counties the option of posting notice of a meeting on the district's website rather than providing it to the county clerk.

Applies only to a meeting held on or after September 1, 2015.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 3562
Thompson, Senfronia
Grace Period for Exhausted or Insufficient Meal Card or Account Balance

Also listed under Student Health/Well-Being (page 59).

Requires a school district that allows a student to use a prepaid meal card or account to purchase meals to adopt a grace period policy for situations in which the meal card or account is exhausted or insufficient to continue for a period determined by the district. Provides that the policy must require the school district to notify the parent or person standing in parental relation that the meal card or account is exhausted. Prohibits the district from charging a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased during the grace period. Allows the district to set a repayment schedule as part of the notice to the parent or person standing in parental relation.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 20
Nelson
State Agency Contracts

Amends various provisions relating to state agency contracting. Requires the comptroller to conduct a study examining the practicality of consolidating state purchasing functions into fewer state agencies or a single state agency. The study must examine cost savings of the various options.

Requires state agencies to retain each contract entered into and all related contract solicitation documents until after the seventh anniversary of the date the contract is completed, expires, or all issues that arise from any litigation, claim, audit, open records request, or other action involving the contract or documents are resolved.

Prohibits a former state officer or employee who, during that service or employment, participated on behalf of a state agency in a procurement or contract negotiation

involving a person, may not accept employment from that person before the second anniversary of the date the state service or employment ceased.

Makes other changes to state purchasing contracts for various agencies.

Changes made in law by this Act only apply only to a contract entered into on or after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 450
Schwertner
Liability of a Political Subdivision

Amends the Civil Practices and Remedies Code to provide that the Texas Tort Claims Act does not apply to a claim against a political subdivision of the state that acquires the land as a result of foreclosure of a lien held by the political subdivision, including land that was bid off to the political subdivision. Includes other criteria that must be satisfied.

Changes made by this Act apply only to a claim that arises on or after the effective date of this Act, regardless of whether the land was acquired by a political subdivision before, on, or after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 733
Fraser
General Election Date for Certain Political Subdivisions

Allows the governing body of a political subdivision, other than a county or municipal utility district, that holds its general election for officers on a date other than the November uniform election to, not later than December 31, 2016, change the date on which it holds its general election for officers to the November uniform election date.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 821
Rodriguez
References to School in the Family Code

Changes several provisions in the Family Code referencing a primary school to an elementary school.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

ASSESSMENT

HB 18

Aycock

Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reports to School Districts

Other provisions listed under Curriculum (pages 33-34), Staff Development (pages 57-58), and the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium (page 68).

Requires an institution of higher education that administers a TSI test to report to each school district from which assessed students graduated all available information on student scores and performance on the TSI, including student demographic information. Mandates the THECB adopt rules as necessary to implement these provisions in a manner that complies with various state and federal laws regarding confidentiality or privacy of student information. Applies this section beginning with TSI tests administered to entering undergraduate students for the fall 2016 semester.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 743

Huberty

STAAR/TEKS Review

Other provisions (relating to TEKS review) listed under Curriculum (page 36).

Requires that before a STAAR is administered, it be determined to be valid and reliable, based on empirical evidence, by an independent entity.

Mandates that the STAAR be designed to be completed within a certain amount of time by 85 percent of the students to whom it is administered: 120 minutes for students in grades 3-5 and 180 minutes for students in grades 6-8. Prevents the amount of time allowed for STAAR administration from exceeding eight hours, and requires the test administration to occur on only one day.

Mandates TEA to reimburse, from appropriated funds, a school district for fees associated with the administration of college preparation tests. Removes references to vendor reimbursement and replaces with school district reimbursement language.

Requires TEA to develop, by rule, a comprehensive methodology for auditing and monitoring performance under contracts for services to develop or administer state tests. Mandates TEA to ensure that all new and renewed contracts include a provision that TEA or a designee may conduct periodic contract compliance reviews, without advance notice, to monitor vendor performance.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1164
VanDeaver
Writing Assessment Pilot Program

Requires TEA to conduct a study during the 2015-16 school year, in coordination with the entity that has been contracted to develop or implement state assessments, to develop a writing assessment method as an alternative to current STAAR and EOC writing assessments.

Mandates the method be designed to assess four specific aspects of a student's writing:

1. mastery of writing TEKS through timed writing samples
2. improvement of writing skills from the beginning to the end of the school year
3. ability to follow the writing process from a rough draft to a final product
4. ability to produce more than one type of writing style

Requires TEA to establish a pilot program to implement the writing assessment method in designated school districts during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. Mandates TEA to include at least one large urban district, one medium-sized district, and one rural district. Requires each selected district to have a student enrollment that is representative of diverse demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds. Mandates that TEA, to the extent practicable, select the number of participating districts that will help offset the cost of the pilot.

Requires TEA to establish the process for consolidating student writing assessments before submitting for scoring. Mandates that individuals who score the writing assessment be coordinated jointly by:

1. the participating school district
2. a public junior college or institution of higher education that has an agreement with the participating district
3. the regional education service center that serves the participating district

Mandates that a random sampling of scored student writing assessments, the size of which TEA will determine, be delivered to TEA.

Requires TEA, by September 1, 2016, to prepare and deliver a report to various state officials covering the development of the writing assessment method.

Requires TEA, by September 1 of both 2017 and 2018, to deliver a report to various state officials that:

1. evaluates the implementation and progress of the pilot program
2. makes recommendations regarding the continuation of expansion of the pilot program

Mandates that TEA adopt rules as necessary for administration purposes of this section, which expires September 1, 2019.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1613
Guillen
High School End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment

Other provisions listed under Curriculum (page 37).

Provides that a student enrolled in a college preparatory math or English language arts course under Education Code Section 28.014 (HB 5, 83rd Legislature requirement for seniors who have not yet demonstrated postsecondary readiness) who satisfies the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college readiness benchmarks on an approved test given at the end of the college preparatory course to be exempt from the Algebra I or English I and II EOC exams, as applicable, even if the student did not perform satisfactorily on a previous administration of the applicable EOC exam. Allows a student who fails to meet the TSI benchmarks to retake the appropriate EOC exam or the approved tests for TSI.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2349
Aycock
Assessments, Performance Standards, and Course Requirements

Allows a student to earn a performance acknowledgment on the student's diploma and transcript for outstanding performance on an established nationally norm-referenced preliminary college preparation test used to determine college/career readiness, college admission, or qualification for an industry certification or license.

Defers release of STAAR and EOC question and answer keys as necessary to develop additional state tests.

Requires a student in the Foundation High School Program to be administered an EOC exam only for a course in which the student is enrolled and for which an EOC exam is administered.

Requires a TEA study of students moving in from other states and a separate report of state test scores from these out-of-state transfer students.

Repeals outdated provisions pertaining to level of performance on special purpose questions (college readiness questions on EOC exams formerly used to determine college readiness for graduation purposes) and required enrollment in certain college preparatory courses (Texas Education Code, Section 39.025[b-2], which was not feasible to implement after HB 5, 83rd Legislature was adopted). Maintains college preparatory courses required in TEC Section 28.014 established with HB 5). Repeals feasibility study of allowing a student to satisfy EOC requirements with successful completion of a dual-credit course (study report was issued in December 2010).

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 149
Seliger
Individual High School Graduation Committees for Certain Students

Also listed under Accountability (pages 12-14)

Applies to a grade 11 or 12 student who has failed to comply with the EOC performance requirements for not more than two courses. Requires a district to establish an individual graduation committee (IGC) for each qualifying student at the end of or after the student's 11th grade year to determine whether the student may qualify to graduate.

Mandates the IGC be composed of several specified parties: the principal or designee; the teacher of each course for which the student failed to perform satisfactorily on the EOC and the department chair or lead teacher supervising that teacher; and as applicable, the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, or a designated advocate if the parent or person standing in parental relation is unable to serve, or the student, at the student' option, if the student is at least 18 years old or an emancipated minor. Requires the school district to provide an appropriate translator for a person who is unable to speak English. Requires the commissioner to establish procedures for appointing an alternative member, if necessary, except that districts must establish such procedures for the 2014-15 school year.

Requires the superintendent to establish procedures for convening an IGC. Mandates that the district ensure a good faith effort to a timely notification of the parent or other appropriate person of the time, place, and purpose of the IGC meeting. Requires the notice to be clear and easy to understand, given in person or by mail, and in English, Spanish, or, to the extent practicable, the recipient's native language.

Establishes eligibility requirements for graduation that include a student's successful completion of the curriculum requirements identified by the SBOE under Texas Education Code Section 28.025(a) (requirements for the Foundation High School Program) or as otherwise provided by the transition plan adopted by the commissioner under Section 28.025(h)(transition plan for replacing the Minimum, Recommended, and Advanced graduation programs). Mandates that the student's IGC recommend additional requirements by which a student may qualify to graduate, including remediation, and for each EOC on which the student fails to perform satisfactorily, completion of a project or preparation of a portfolio of work samples that demonstrate proficiency in the subject area. Allows a student to submit coursework previously completed to satisfy a recommended additional requirement.

Requires the IGC, in determining whether a student is qualified to graduate, to consider the following 15 items or categories of information about the student:

1. recommendation of the teacher of the pertinent course
2. grade of the pertinent course
3. score on each EOC on which the student failed to perform satisfactorily
4. performance on any additional IGC-recommended requirements

5. number of hours of remediation attended by the student, including a college preparatory course or transitional college course in reading or math
6. school attendance rate
7. satisfaction of any Texas Success Initiative college benchmarks.
8. successful completion of a dual-credit course in English, math, science, or social studies
9. successful completion of a pre-AP, AP, or IB program course in English, math, science, or social studies
10. rating of “advanced high” on most recent TELPAS
11. score of 50 or greater on a CLEP exam
12. score on ACT, SAT, or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test
13. completion of a sequence of CTE courses needed to attain an industry-recognized credential or certificate
14. overall preparedness for postsecondary success
15. other academic information designated for consideration by the IGC

Provides that after considering these criteria, the IGC may determine that the student is qualified to graduate. Mandates that a student for whom an IGC is established may graduate and receive a high school diploma only if the student successfully completes all *additional* requirements recommended by the IGC, meets the curriculum requirements, and the IGC’s vote is unanimous.

Requires the commissioner to establish, by rule, a timeline for making a determination. (Districts must establish the timelines for the 2014-15 school year.) Establishes that these provisions do not create a property interest in graduation, and the IGC’s decision is final and may not be appealed.

Requires that, notwithstanding any action taken by an IGC, a district must administer an EOC exam to any student who fails to perform satisfactorily as provided by Section 39.025(b) (education code that allows a student to retake an EOC exam if the student did not achieve satisfactory performance on it). States that for purposes of Section 39.053(c)(education code that allows a student to earn a diploma after successfully retaking an EOC), this is considered an assessment required for graduation retaken by a student.

Adds a requirement that each school district report through PEIMS the number of students each school year for whom an IGC is established and the number awarded diplomas based on IGC decisions. Requires a district to report the information by December 1 of the school year following the year the student is awarded a diploma. Mandates that TEA include this information on its website.

Provides that a student who, after retaking an EOC exam for Algebra I or English II, has failed to perform satisfactorily, but who receives a proficient score on the Texas Success Initiative exam for that subject, satisfies the EOC requirement.

States that an open-enrollment charter school is subject to the same IGC requirements as other public schools.

Requires the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement these provisions by the 2015-16 school year. Provides that these provisions expire September 1, 2017, except that reporting requirements expire September 1, 2018.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 453

Seliger

Minimum Scores Needed for Credit by Exam for CLEP

Reduces from 60 to 50 the minimum scaled score required for a student in grade 6 or above to earn credit for a subject by examination administered through the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 1776

Menéndez

Exemption from Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment

Exempts high school students from the TSI for two years after they graduate if they successfully complete a college preparatory course in the exempted area within the first year of enrollment in an institution of higher education. Applies to students entering institutions of higher education for the fall 2015 semester. Requires THECB to collect data and analyze the effectiveness of college preparatory courses based on students' successful completion of first-year, college-level courses in exempted areas, and report findings to partnering institutions of higher education and school districts.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

CERTIFICATION

HB 218

Márquez

Certification Requirements for Teachers in Bilingual Classrooms

Requires a teacher assigned to a bilingual education program using the transitional bilingual/early exit program model or the transitional bilingual/late exit model to be appropriately certified for bilingual education.

Requires a teacher assigned to a bilingual education program using a dual-language immersion/one-way or two-way program model to be appropriately certified for bilingual

education for the program component provided in a language other than English, and for bilingual education or English as a second language for the component provided in English.

Allows a district using the dual-language immersion/one-way or two-way program model to assign different teachers for the different components.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1300

Capriglione

Eligibility Requirements for Admission of Certain Persons to Educator Preparation Programs

Requires the State Board for Educator Certification to amend its rules to admit in extraordinary circumstances a person who fails to satisfy a grade point average requirement provided that each person performs, before admission, at a satisfactory level on an appropriate subject matter for each subject in which the person seeks certification.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1783

Moody

Notification of Educator Crime to SBEC

Other provisions listed under Discipline/Safety (pages 40-41).

Requires the superintendent or director of a school district or open-enrollment charter school to notify the SBEC if an educator employed by the school has a criminal record and the school or district obtained information about the educator's criminal record by means other than criminal history clearinghouse, and if an educator's employment at the school was terminated based on evidence that the educator was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor.

Requires a superintendent or director of a school district or open-enrollment charter school to complete an investigation of an educator that is based on evidence that the educator may have been involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor, despite the educator's resignation. Requires the superintendent or director of a school district to notify the SBEC in writing, not later than the seventh day after the superintendent or director knew about an employee's criminal record or termination of employment or resignation.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2014
Sheets
Certification of Military Personnel to Teach Career and Technology Education Classes

Provides that a military person who obtains experience in a specific trade through military service satisfies the SBEC requirement that a person seeking a trades and industries education certification hold a license or other professional credential. Prohibits the SBEC from proposing a rule requiring a current or former member of the U.S. armed services who seeks CTE certification to hold a credential related to that trade or possess experience related to that trade other than the experience in that trade obtained during military service.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2205
Crownover
Educator Preparation Programs, Educator Certification, Teaching Permits, Procedures for Investigating Educator Misconduct

Increases the SBEC from 14 to 15 members. Provides that the governor shall appoint two nonvoting members, including a person with experience working for and knowledge of an alternative educator preparation program and who is not affiliated with an institution of higher education.

Allows the SBEC to make a written delegation of authority to the commissioner of education or TEA to informally dispose of a contested case involving educator certification.

Provides that a person must have an overall grade point average of 2.5 on a four-point scale on any course work previously attempted at a public or private institution of higher education or a 2.5 grade point average for the last 60 semester credit hours to be eligible for admission to an educator preparation program.

Provides that the overall grade point average of each incoming class admitted by an educator preparation program, including an alternative education program, may not be less than 3.0 on a four-point scale or the equivalent, or a higher overall grade point average prescribed by the SBEC. Excludes a person seeking CTE certification from the overall grade point average of an incoming class.

Requires the SBEC to propose rules that establish standards governing the approval or renewal of approval of educator certification programs and certification fields authorized to be offered by an educator preparation program.

Adds race as a criterion to be used in determining the accountability of all preparation programs. Requires that results from a teacher satisfaction survey be considered in assessing accountability of a preparation program.

Requires the SBEC to propose rules necessary for the sanction of educator preparation programs that do not meet accountability standards or comply with state law or rules and to at least annually review the accreditation status of each educator preparation program.

Requires the SBEC to make available the following information regarding each educator preparation program: (1) for each semester, the average ratio of field supervisors to candidates completing student teaching, clinical teaching, or an internship in an educator preparation program; (2) the percentage of teachers employed under a standard teaching certificate within one year of completing the program; and (3) the results of teacher satisfaction surveys.

Requires the SBEC to propose rules necessary to develop a set of risk factors to use in assessing the overall risk level of each educator preparation program. Provides a list of risk factors to be included.

Requires the SBEC to propose rules necessary to establish a process for a candidate for teacher certification to direct a complaint against an educator preparation program to TEA. Requires the SBEC to post the process on TEA's website. Provides that the SBEC has no authority to arbitrate or resolve contractual or commercial issues between an educator preparation program and a candidate for teacher certification. Provides that a person may not retake an examination more than four times, unless the SBEC waives the limitation for good cause as prescribed by the board.

Allows a school district board of trustees to issue a school district teaching permit to a person who will teach only CTE courses based on qualifications certified by the superintendent. Provides that qualifications must include demonstrated subject matter expertise such as professional work experience, formal training and education, holding an active, professional, and relevant industry license, certification, or registration, or any combination of work experience, training and education, or industry license, certification, or registration, in the subject matter to be taught. Allows a person to teach immediately upon the issuance of a permit. Requires the board of trustees to send the commissioner a written statement identifying the person, the course the person will teach, and the person's qualifications to teach the course.

Provides that during a commissioner's investigation of an educator for an alleged incident of misconduct, the commissioner may issue a subpoena to compel the production, for inspection or copying, of relevant evidence located in this state.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 168
Uresti
Temporary Waiver of Superintendent Certification

Allows the commissioner to waive the requirement for certification of a superintendent if requested by a school district. Prohibits a person from being employed as a superintendent until the waiver is issued, but does allow a person to be designated as a temporary or interim superintendent without a waiver.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 382
Uresti
Continuing Education Credit for Instruction Related to Use of Automated External Defibrillator

Requires the SBEC to adopt rules allowing an educator to receive credit toward the educator's continuing education requirements for completion of an instructional course on the use of an automated external defibrillator.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 674
Campbell
Instruction on Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Youth Suicide

Requires that any minimum academic qualifications for a certificate that require a person to possess a bachelor's degree must also require that the person receive, as part of the training required to obtain that certificate, instruction regarding mental health, substance abuse, and youth suicide. Requires the instruction to be provided through a program selected from the list of recommended best practice-based programs established under Section 161.325 in the Health and Safety Code and include effective strategies for teaching and intervening with students with mental or emotional disorders, including de-escalation techniques and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 1309
Menéndez
Establishment of Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Teaching Certificate

Requires the SBEC to establish a standard Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) teaching certificate to provide Junior ROTC. Provides eligibility criteria for the certificate. Requires the SBEC to propose rules to approve educator preparation

programs and to establish requirements relating to a person's training and experience and a person's employment by a school district.

Provides that a teacher may apply creditable years of teaching experience as a classroom teacher for any period during which the teacher was employed by a school district as a Junior ROTC instructor to satisfy eligibility requirements for certification as a principal.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

CHARTER SCHOOLS

HB 1170

Farney

Applicability of Certain Laws to Open-Enrollment Schools

Amends the Education Code to provide that an open-enrollment charter school is a local government for purposes of the Government Code and a political subdivision and local governmental entity for purposes of the Local Government Code. Allows an open-enrollment charter school to extend workers' compensation benefits to employees of a school through any method available to a political subdivision in the Labor Code.

Provides that an open-enrollment charter school that self-insures is considered to be an insurance carrier under the Labor Code. Provides that an open-enrollment charter school operated by a tax-exempt entity is not considered to be a political subdivision, local government, or local governmental entity unless the applicable statute states that the statute applies to an open-enrollment charter school.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1171

Farney

Applicability of Certain Immunity and Liability Laws to Open-Enrollment Charter Schools

Provides that an open-enrollment charter school or charter holder is immune from suit, is a governmental entity for liability purposes under the Civil Practice and Remedies Code, and is a local governmental entity under the Local Government Code for contract liability.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1842
Aycock
Expansion or Revocation of Certain Charters

Other provisions listed under Accountability (pages 6-8).

Simplifies the ability of holders of high-performing charters to establish one or more new campuses under an existing charter. Mandates that to do so, a charter holder must *not* have received written notice from the commissioner of a determination that certain requirements have not been satisfied. Requires the commissioner to adopt informal procedures for denying the renewal of a charter that must allow charter holder representatives to meet with the commissioner to discuss the decision and submit additional information. Mandates that the commissioner provide a written response to any information submitted.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2251
Anchia
Established Schedule of Payments for Certain Charter Schools

Provides that on request of an open-enrollment charter school, the commissioner must compare the student enrollment of the school for the current school year to the enrollment for the preceding year. If the number for the current year has increased by 10 percent or more from the prior year, the school may request that payments from the Foundation School Fund to the school for the following school year and each subsequent year be made according to a schedule prescribed by this Act. A school that qualifies to receive funding in this manner is entitled to do so for three school years, at which time the commissioner will determine the school's continued eligibility to receive payments in this manner for an additional three years. Subsequently, the school must reestablish eligibility every three school years.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2851
Taylor, Van
Nonprofit Organizations Issuing Charter School Revenue Bonds

Requires the governor to approve the Texas Public Finance Authority's appointment of directors of the nonprofit corporation established to issue revenue bonds to certain open-enrollment charter schools. Provides that a director, officer, or employee of the nonprofit corporation is not personally liable for damage, loss, or injury resulting from the performance of the person's duties, or on any commitment or agreement executed on behalf of the corporation.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 955
Schwertner
Locations of Open-Enrollment Charter Schools Created by Institutions of Higher Education

Allows the commissioner of education to grant a public senior college or university a charter to operate an open-enrollment charter school in any county of the state. Requires the commissioner to consider the locations of existing open-enrollment charter schools to avoid duplication of services and the need of the community in the area in which the applicant proposes to operate the school before issuing the charter.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 2062
Watson
Authorizing Charter Holders to Provide Combined Services

Allows an open-enrollment charter school designated as a dropout recovery school and an adult education program provided under a high school diploma and industry certification charter school pilot program to place students, regardless of their age, at the same facility and in the same classroom setting or learning environment, the same cafeteria, or the same activity sanctioned by the school and the program for purposes of providing services to the students.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

CURRICULUM _____

HB 18
Aycock
Dual Credit, Instruction in High School, College, and Career Preparation, and Public Outreach Promoting Curriculum Changes

Other provisions listed under Accountability (page 6), Assessment (page 21), Staff Development (pages 57-58), and the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium (page 68).

Dual Credit

Prohibits THECB rules from limiting the number of dual-credit courses or hours in which a student may enroll while in high school or each semester of an academic year.

Joint High School and Junior College Credit Courses

Requires a course offered for joint high school and junior college credit to be taught by a qualified instructor approved or selected by the junior college. Prescribes the minimum degree requirements for an instructor to be qualified that includes holding:

1. a doctoral or master's degree in the discipline that is the subject of the course
2. a master's degree in another discipline with a concentration that required completion of a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the discipline that is the subject of the course
3. other specified qualifications, if the person is a teacher of a course that is offered in an associate degree program not designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree program

Mandates that by the 60th day after receipt, a public junior college approve or reject an application to teach a course at a high school that is submitted by an instructor employed by the school district, organization, or other person who operates the high school with which the junior college entered into an agreement to offer the course.

Amends the Labor Code to allow funds to be awarded from the skills development fund to a school district to be used under an agreement with a lower-division institution of higher education to support courses offered for joint high school and college credit.

Instruction in High School, College, and Career Preparation

Requires each school district to provide instruction to students in grades 7 or 8 in preparing for high school, college, and a career. Mandates that the instruction include information on the creation of a high school personal graduation plan, the distinguished level of achievement, each endorsement, college readiness standards, and potential career choices along with the education required for those choices.

Allows a district to provide the instruction as part of an existing course in the required curriculum, as part of an existing CTE course, designated by the SBOE as appropriate for that purpose, or in a new elective course. Requires a district to ensure that each student receive this instruction at least once in grades 7 or 8.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Public Outreach Promoting Curriculum Changes

Requires TEA to develop uniform public outreach materials that explain the importance and outline the details of public school curriculum changes (made under HB 5, 83rd Texas Legislature). Mandates the materials be made available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Requires the materials to be in a form that can be mailed and that they include an explanation of the basic career and college-readiness components of each endorsement, the curriculum requirements for automatic college admission, and applicable course, graduation plan, and endorsement requirements for financial aid, including particular grant and loan programs. Requires TEA to develop these materials by December 1, 2015, and expires this section September 1, 2018.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 440
Gonzales, Larry
Adapting Physical Education for Mentally Disabled Students

Requires the PE curriculum to meet the needs of students who have a disability, including a student who is a person with a disability described under Texas Education Code Section 29.003(b) or through criteria developed by TEA in accordance with that section.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 505
Rodriguez, Eddie
Prohibition of Limitation on Number of Dual-Credit Courses or Hours

Prohibits the commissioner or the THECB from adopting a rule limiting the number of dual-credit courses or hours in which a student may enroll while in high school, the number of dual-credit courses or hours in which a student may enroll each semester or academic year, or the grade levels at which a student may be eligible to enroll in a dual-credit course.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 731
Lucio III, Eddie
Pre-K Funding Enhancement Linked to Three-Year High School Diploma Program

Also listed under Early Education (page 47).

Adds an adjustment in the Foundation School Program for certain school districts with early high school graduation programs by establishing a pilot program that enables the state to evaluate the benefit of providing additional funds at the pre-K level for low-income students.

Requires the commissioner to provide pre-K funding to a school district located in a county that borders Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico. Mandates that the commissioner provide funding for a district's pre-K program on a half-day basis for a number of low-income students equal to twice the number of students who received, as a result of participation in an early high school graduation program operated by the district, a high school diploma from the district during the preceding school year after three years of secondary school attendance. Allows the commissioner to adopt rules.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 743
Huberty
TEKS Review

Other provisions listed under Assessment (page 21).

Requires the TEA to study the TEKS of the required (foundation) curriculum, STAAR tests, and EOC exams. Mandates that the study evaluate: the number and scope of the TEKS and whether either should be limited; the number and subjects of STAAR tests in grades 3-8; and how assessments assess standards essential for student success and whether they should also assess supporting standards.

Mandates TEA to report the results of its study to the SBOE by March 1, 2016. Requires the SBOE to review the study and submit to the governor and each member of the Legislature TEA's report and SBOE recommendations regarding each issue evaluated.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1430
King, Susan
Inclusion of Mental Health in the Public Service Endorsement

Requires TEA to ensure that information provided to students related to health science careers include information on mental health professions. States that to the extent the Public Services Endorsement includes information on health science career pathways, the information must include mental health careers as a possible pathway.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1431
King, Susan
Development of Optional Career-Oriented Foreign Language Program

Requires the SBOE, in consultation with the commissioner of higher education and business and industry leaders, to develop an advanced language course that a school district may use to instruct students in industry-related terminology that prepares them to communicate in a language other than English in a specific professional business, or industry environment.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1613
Guillen
Alignment of TEKS with College Readiness Standards

Other provisions listed under Assessment (page 23).

Requires the SBOE, by January 1, 2016, to develop and adopt by rule, a chart that clearly indicates the alignment of the college readiness standards and expectations with the TEKS.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1786
Dutton
Transfer of Driver and Traffic Safety Education

Amends various statutes to transfer the driver and traffic safety education program from TEA and the Department of Public Safety to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1992
Zerwas
Advanced Placement (AP) Scores for Undergraduate Course Credit

Prohibits an institution of higher education from requiring a score of more than three on an AP exam for granting course credit unless the institution's chief academic officer determines, based on evidence, that a higher score is necessary to indicate that a student is sufficiently prepared to be successful in a related, more advanced course.

Requires the THECB and others to conduct a study on the performance of undergraduate students at institutions of higher education who receive undergraduate course credit for achieving required scores on one or more AP exams. Mandates that the study compare academic performance rates, retention rates, and graduation rates of students who complete a course at an institution and of students who receive AP credit for that course for a score of three or more, disaggregated by score. Requires the THECB to submit reports to various state officials by January 1, 2017, and 2019.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2025
Gonzales, Larry
Three-Year High School Diploma Plan Pilot Program

Allows participation in the three-year high school diploma plan pilot program by a district with an enrollment of more than 5,000 but less than 7,000 students and located primarily in a county that contains the headwaters of the San Gabriel River.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2812
Springer
Repeal of Dual-Credit Limit and Calculation of ADA

Repeals the limit on the number of dual-credit courses in which students can enroll under certain circumstances.

Allows the commissioner to approve off-campus instructional programs provided by an entity other than a school district or open-enrollment charter school as a program in which student participation may be counted for ADA purposes. Mandates the commissioner adopt by rule verification and reporting procedures concerning time spent by students in these instructional programs. Provides that, subject to these rules, time that a student participates in an approved off-campus instructional program shall be counted as part of the minimum number of instructional hours required for a student to be considered full time under ADA.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 3987
Farney
Higher Education Savings Programs and Personal Financial Literacy

Allows a school district or open-enrollment charter school to establish a school-based savings program to facilitate increased awareness of the importance of saving for higher education and to facilitate personal financial literacy instruction. Permits the program to be offered in conjunction with a personal financial literacy course.

Allows a school-based savings program to promote general savings and savings for higher education by offering various types of accounts through partnerships with appropriate institutions. Addresses the establishment and function of these partnerships with financial institutions and with public sector partners, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic organizations.

Amends other sections of code as necessary to exclude these accounts from assets considered in determining a student's eligibility for a TEXAS grant or other state-funded financial assistance, including assistance under Human Resources Code, Chapters 31, 32, and 33. Specifies the amount of the exclusion in the amended sections of code.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 968**West****Prescription Drug Misuse Awareness Component of TEKS**

Requires the SBOE to adopt essential knowledge and skills for the health curriculum that address the dangers, causes, consequences, signs, symptoms, and treatment of nonmedical use of prescription drugs. Mandates that the TEA compile a list of evidence-based prescription drug misuse awareness programs from which a school district may choose to use in its middle, junior high, and high school health curricula.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 972**Kolkhorst****Reading-to-Learn Academies for Teachers (Grades 4-5)**

Requires the commissioner to develop and make available reading-to-learn academies for teachers who provide reading comprehension instruction to students in grades 4 and 5. Specifies the academy must satisfy select criteria regarding the training and resources provided.

Requires that the commissioner adopt criteria for selecting teachers to attend an academy. Mandates that the commissioner grant priority to teachers employed by a district at a campus at which 50 percent or more of the students are economically disadvantaged, and requires the provision of a process through which a teacher not employed at such a campus may attend the academy if there is available space and the employing district pays the cost.

Provides appropriated funds by which a teacher who attends an academy is entitled to a stipend as determined by the commissioner. Prevents the stipend from being considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 1004**Bettencourt****Harris County Junior College Dual Credit**

Allows a public junior college with a service area located wholly or partly in a county with a population of more than 3 million to enter into an articulation agreement to provide a dropout recovery program with any school district located wholly or partly in a county with a population of 3 million.

Requires a public junior college with a service area located wholly or partly in a county with a population of more than 3 million to enter into an agreement with each school district located wholly or partly in a county with a population of more than 3 million to offer one or more joint high school and junior college credit courses. Allows a student enrolled in a school district within the service area to enroll in a course.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 1259

Rodriguez

Teacher Input Into an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Amends the statewide plan for the delivery of services to children with disabilities to ensure that each school district develops a process to be used by a teacher who instructs a student with a disability in a regular classroom setting to provide input in the development of the student's IEP. Provides that if a committee is required to include a regular education teacher, the regular education teacher included must, to the extent practicable, be a teacher responsible for implementing a portion of the child's IEP. Requires that the written statement of the IEP must document the committee's decisions on issues discussed at each committee meeting. Provides requirements for the statement's content. Allows each committee member who disagrees with the IEP developed to include a statement of disagreement.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

DISCIPLINE/SAFETY

HB 1783

Moody

Right of a School Employee to Report a Crime

Other provisions listed under Certification (page 27).

Provides that an open-enrollment charter school is subject to a prohibition, restriction, or requirement relating to the right of a school employee to report a crime.

Allows an employee of a school district or open enrollment charter school to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime. Prohibits a school district or open-enrollment charter school from adopting a policy requiring a school employee to refrain from reporting a crime witnessed at the school or report a crime witnessed at the school only to certain persons or peace officers.

Amends the Penal Code to provide that public servants, including school administrators, commit an offense if they coerce another into suppressing or failing to report that information to a law enforcement agency.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2398
White, James
Truancy
Decriminalization of Truancy

Decriminalizes truancy.

Allows a court to dismiss a charge of a parent contributing to nonattendance if the court finds that the dismissal would be in the interest of justice.

Entitles an individual who has been convicted of a truancy offense or who has had a complaint for a truancy offense dismissed to have the conviction or complaint and records relating to the conviction or complaint expunged, regardless of whether the individual has filed a petition for expunction.

Requires the school district to issue a warning letter to a person who has had three unexcused absences. It must state that the person's enrollment may be revoked for the remainder of the school year if the person has more than five unexcused absences in a semester.

Provides in detail the truancy prevention measures a district can implement.

Requires TEA to adopt rules creating minimum standards for truancy prevention measures adopted by a school district, establishing a set of best practices for truancy prevention measures, and providing for sanctions for a school district that fails to comply with the truancy prevention measures.

Establishes detailed, simple, civil judicial procedures to use in cases involving allegations of truant conduct in order to hold student accountable for excessive school absences.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2684
Giddings
Model Training Curriculum for School District Peace Officers and School Resource Officers

Requires a school district with an enrollment of 30,000 or more students that commissions a school district peace officer or at which a school resource officer provides

law enforcement to adopt a policy requiring the officer to complete the education and training program required by the newly added Section 1701.263 in the Occupations Code, which requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, in consultation with designated institutes and centers, to create, adopt, and distribute a model training curriculum for school district peace officers and school resource officers. Requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to issue a professional achievement or proficiency certificate to a peace officer who completes the education and training program.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 107
Whitmire
Campus Behavior Coordinators

Requires a person at each campus to be designated to serve as a campus behavior coordinator. Allows the campus principal or any other campus administrator selected by the principal to serve as the campus behavior coordinator.

Provides that the campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline. Allows the specific duties of the campus behavior coordinator to be established by campus or district policy. Requires the campus behavior coordinator to promptly notify a student's parent or guardian, by telephone or in person, if the student is placed into in-school or out-of-school suspension, placed in a disciplinary alternative education program, expelled, placed in a juvenile justice alternative education program, or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer. Requires the coordinator to make a good faith effort to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action is taken, for delivery to the student's parent or guardian. Requires the principal or other designee to provide notice if the coordinator is unable to provide prompt notice.

Allows a teacher to send a student to the campus behavior coordinator to maintain effective discipline in the classroom. Requires the coordinator to employ appropriate discipline management techniques that can be reasonably expected to improve the student's behavior before returning the student to the classroom. Requires the coordinator to employ alternative discipline management techniques if the student's behavior does not improve.

Requires the expulsion of a student who engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of unlawfully carrying weapons under Section 46.02 of the Penal Code, or elements of an offense relating to prohibited weapons under Section 46.05 of the Penal Code.

Requires a campus behavior coordinator to consider various factors, including whether the student acted in self-defense and the intent or lack of intent at the time of the action,

before ordering the suspension, expulsion, removal to a disciplinary alternative education program, or placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program.

Requires a board of trustees to consider various factors, including whether the student acted in self-defense and the intent or lack of intent at the time of the action, before ordering a student's expulsion.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 507

Lucio Jr., Eddie

Video Cameras in Certain Special Education Classrooms

Requires a school district or open-enrollment charter holder, upon the request of a parent, trustee, or staff member, to provide equipment, including a video camera, to each school in the district or each charter school campus in which a student who receives special education services in a self-contained classroom or other special education setting is enrolled. Requires each school or campus that receives equipment to place, operate, and maintain one or more video cameras in each self-contained classroom or other special education setting in which a majority of the students in regular attendance are provided special education and related services and assigned to a self-contained classroom or other special education setting for at least 50 percent of the instructional day.

Requires the video cameras placed in the classroom to cover all areas of the classroom or special education setting, except that the inside of a bathroom or any area in the classroom setting in which a student's clothes are changed may not be visually monitored. Requires audio to be recorded from all areas of the classroom or other special education setting.

Requires a school or campus to provide written notice of the camera's placement to all school or campus staff and to the parents of a student receiving special education services in the classroom or setting. Requires a school district or open-enrollment charter school to retain video recorded in the special education classroom for at least six months after the date the video was recorded.

Provides that the law does not waive immunity from liability of a school district or open-enrollment charter school or of district or school officers or employees. It also does not create any liability for a cause of action against a school district or open-enrollment charter school or against district or school officers or employees.

Prohibits a school district or open-enrollment charter school from allowing regular or continual monitoring of recorded video or its use for teacher evaluation or any other purpose other than the promotion of the safety of students receiving special education services in a self-contained classroom or other special education setting.

Provides that the video recording is confidential and requires that it be released for viewing under limited circumstances. Requires notification of a violation of state law to the Department of Family and Protective Services for investigation if the person viewing the video believes that the recording documents a violation. Allows legal and human resources personnel in a school district to view the recording if a person viewing it believes it documents a violation of district or school policy.

Allows the commissioner of education to establish by rule a grant program through which excess funds from the Foundation School Program are awarded for grants for the purchase of video equipment, or for the reimbursement of costs for previously purchased video equipment, used for monitoring special education classrooms or other special education settings. Requires the commissioner to give highest priority to districts with maintenance and operations tax rates at the greatest rates permitted by law when awarding grants. Requires the commissioner to also give priority to districts with maintenance and operations tax rates equal to the state maximum compressed tax rate and lowest amounts of maintenance and operations tax revenue and districts with debt service tax rates near or equal to the greatest rates permitted by law.

Provides that, subject to the availability of funds, the commissioner of education will distribute grant funds beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Provides that the requirement regarding the placement and use of video cameras in self-contained classrooms or other settings providing special education services applies beginning with the 2016-17 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 996
Taylor, Van
Parental Notification of School Marshal

Requires a school district to provide a parent or guardian written notice indicating whether any employee of the school is currently appointed a school marshal. Prohibits the school district from disclosing confidential information. Requires the parent or legal guardian to submit the inquiry in writing.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

EARLY EDUCATION

HB 4 Huberty High-Quality Pre-K Grant Program

Due to the dense content of HB 4, the bill is divided into sections by topic.

Establishment of a New Pre-K Grant Program

Introduces a new High Quality Pre-K Grant Program as an option for school districts. Defines “program” as one provided free of tuition or fees. Provides that from appropriated funds, the commissioner by rule must establish a grant program under which funds are awarded to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to implement a pre-K program. Mandates that a district may participate and receive funding only if it meets all required program standards.

Provides that this grant program is subject to any other legal requirements that apply to pre-K, except that to the extent a conflict exists between this new subchapter and any other provision of law, this subchapter prevails.

Funding

Specifies that a district is eligible for half-day funding under the Foundation School Program for each student who satisfies eligibility requirements and who is enrolled in a program class. Entitles a district to grant funding in an amount determined by the commissioner for each qualifying student in an ADA program class. Prevents the commissioner from establishing an amount of funding that exceeds \$1,500 per qualifying student for the entire instructional period on a school day.

Qualifying students for the additional funding must satisfy eligibility requirements and be 4 years old on September 1 of the year the student begins the program.

Mandates that a district use the funding only to improve the quality of its pre-K program. Prevents the total grant amount of additional funding distributed to school districts from exceeding \$130 million for the state fiscal biennium ending August 31, 2017. (Note: \$118 million for the grant program was appropriated for the biennium in Article III of the appropriations bill).

Curriculum Requirements

Requires participating districts to select and implement a curriculum that includes TEA’s pre-K guidelines, measures the progress of students in meeting the recommended learning outcomes, and does not use the Common Core State Standards.

Requirements for Grant Program Teachers

Mandates that each teacher for a program class be certified and have at least one additional qualification: (a) a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or another early childhood education credential approved by TEA; (b) certification offered through

an accredited Montessori Internationale or Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education; (c) at least eight years' experience of teaching in a nationally accredited child care program; (d) be employed as a pre-K teacher in a district that has received approval from the commissioner for the district's pre-K-specific instructional training plan that the teacher uses in the teacher's classroom; or (e) an equivalent certification. This requirement applies beginning with the 2016-17 school year.

Allows a regional ESC to offer teachers the training for a CDA credential. Mandates that the training not include Common Core State Standards.

Requires a district to attempt to maintain an average ratio in any program class of not less than one certified teacher or aide for each 11 students.

TEA-Developed Teacher Training Course

Requires the commissioner to develop a training course to provide instruction to pre-K teachers employed by a district or open-enrollment charter school. Mandates that the course provide instruction in the development and operation of effective pre-K classes, including training in: the pre-K guidelines; effective and systematic instructional techniques for teaching students using the guidelines; and designing and implementing a comprehensive curriculum in the classroom.

Family Engagement Plan

Requires a district to develop and implement a family engagement plan to assist in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. Mandates the plan be based on family engagement strategies established by TEA in accordance with certain requirements.

Program Evaluation

Requires districts to select and implement appropriate methods for evaluating its program classes by measuring student progress, and to make data from the evaluation results available to parents.

Allows a district to administer appropriate pre-K diagnostic assessments selected from a commissioner's list. Prevents a district from administering a state standardized assessment instrument.

Program Funding Evaluation

Requires the commissioner to evaluate the use and effectiveness of funding provided in improving student learning, and to identify effective instruction strategies implemented by districts. Mandates that the commissioner by December 1, 2018, and each even-numbered year thereafter, deliver a report of the evaluation results to the Legislature.

Eligible Private Providers

Allows a participating district to contract with an eligible private provider to provide services or equipment for the program. Outlines eligibility criteria for private providers.

PEIMS Reporting Requirements

Requires a school district offering pre-K classes, including this new grant program, to add new information to its PEIMS report regarding class size, student-to-teacher ratios, assessments administered, and curriculum utilized. Prevents PEIMS information from being used for purposes of determining a district's accreditation or a campus or district performance rating.

Reports and Studies

Adds new requirement for TEA to produce and make available on its website annual district and campus-level reports containing specific information from the previous school year on early education in school districts and open-enrollment charter schools.

Requires TEA and the Department of Family and Protective Services to conduct a joint study to develop recommendations regarding optimal class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios for pre-K classes. Mandates the report be submitted to the Legislature by September 1, 2016.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 731

Lucio III, Eddie

Pre-K Funding Enhancement Linked to Three-Year High School Diploma Program

Also listed under Curriculum (page 35).

Adds an adjustment in the Foundation School Program for certain school districts with early high school graduation programs by establishing a pilot program that enables the state to evaluate the benefit of providing additional funds at the pre-K level for low-income students.

Requires the commissioner to provide pre-K funding to a school district located in a county that borders Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico. Mandates that the commissioner provide funding for a district's pre-K program on a half-day basis for a number of low-income students equal to twice the number of students who received, as a result of participation in an early high school graduation program operated by the district, a high school diploma from the district during the preceding school year after three years of secondary school attendance. Allows the commissioner to adopt rules.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 925
Kolkhorst
Teacher Literacy Achievement Academies (Grades K-3)

Requires the commissioner to develop and make available literacy achievement academies for teachers who provide reading instruction to K-3 students.

Requires an academy to include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, and in the use of empirically validated instructional methods that are appropriate for struggling readers. Allows an academy to include training in effective instructional practices in writing.

Requires that the commissioner adopt criteria for selecting teachers to attend an academy. Mandates that the commissioner grant priority to teachers employed by a district at a campus at which 50 percent or more of the students are economically disadvantaged, and requires the provision of a process through which a teacher not employed at such a campus may attend the academy if there is available space and the employing district pays the cost.

Provides appropriated funds by which a teacher who attends an academy is entitled to a stipend as determined by the commissioner. Prevents the stipend from being considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary.

Allows the commissioner to request that regional ESCs assist with training and other activities related to the development and operation of the academies.

Expires this section of law September 1, 2027.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 934
Kolkhorst
Teacher Mathematics Achievement Academies (Grades K-3)

Requires the commissioner to develop and make available math achievement academies for teachers who provide math instruction to K-3 students.

Mandates the academy include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in math, including problem solving, the place value system, whole number operations, and fractions.

Requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selecting teachers to attend an academy. Mandates that the commissioner grant priority to teachers employed by a district at a campus at which 50 percent or more of the students are economically disadvantaged, and requires the provision of a process through which a teacher not employed at such a campus may attend the academy if there is available space and the employing district pays the cost.

Provides appropriated funds by which a teacher who attends an academy is entitled to a stipend as determined by the commissioner. Prevents the stipend from being considered in determining whether the district is paying the teacher the minimum monthly salary.

Allows the commissioner to request that regional ESCs assist with training and other activities related to the development and operation of the academies.

Expires this section of law September 1, 2027.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 935
Kolkhorst
Reading Excellence Team Pilot

Requires the commissioner, using appropriated funds, to establish a reading excellence team pilot program by September 1, 2016. Provides that a district is eligible to participate if it has low student performance on a diagnostic reading instrument or a grade 3 reading assessment instrument.

Requires the pilot program to establish reading excellence teams, allow an eligible district to request the assistance of a team, and provide a team to a requesting district to review the results of the assessments to determine the campuses and classrooms with the greatest need of assistance and to work with teachers on those campuses and in those classrooms to provide training to improve student reading outcomes.

Mandates that the commissioner adopt rules for the establishment of the pilot, including rules establishing qualifications and criteria for selecting reading instruction specialists for a reading excellence team.

Expires this section of law September 1, 2021.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

PAPERWORK/REPORTING

HB 181
Bell
Information Printed on High School Diplomas

Removes the requirement that an endorsement, a performance acknowledgement, and a distinguished level of achievement be printed on a high school diploma. Provides that the removal requirement applies to a high school diploma issued at the end of the 2014-15 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1706
VanDeaver
Elimination of Duplicate State/Federal Reports

Requires that the commissioner's periodic review of required reports and paperwork include a comparison of the reports and paperwork required by state and federal law. Directs the commissioner to eliminate any reports and paperwork required by state law that duplicates the content of those required by federal law.

Requires superintendents to ensure a copy of any report required by federal law, rule, or regulation also be delivered to TEA.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1804
Naishtat
Notice by Campus and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools for Foster Children

Requires campuses and open-enrollment charter schools to provide notice to the child's educational decision-maker and caseworker regarding events that may significantly impact the education of a child.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1993
Sheffield
Electronic Notices to Parents

Allows a school district that uses an electronic platform to communicate a student grade and performance information to parents to permit parents to sign required notices electronically so long as the district retains a record verifying the parent's acknowledgment of the required notice. A district that accepts electronic signatures must also offer parents the option to provide handwritten signatures.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

FINANCE

HB 1 Otto State Budget

The total state budget for 2016-17 biennium was \$209.43 billion, which is a 3.56 percent increase over 2014-15. It includes an increase of approximately \$1.5 billion to the Foundation School Program (FSP) above \$2.5 billion for enrollment growth.

2016-17 budget highlights for the FSP include:

- \$1.2 billion for the basic allotment per ADA (\$5,140 both years)
- \$200 million for fractional funding.
- Guaranteed Yield increases to \$74.28 (2016) and \$77.53 (2017)
- \$55.5 million for IFA (FY 2017)
- \$47.5 million for NIFA

Other budget items outside of FSP include: (*unchanged from 2014-15 budget)

- \$25 million for ESCs*
- \$31 million for Communities in Schools*
- \$12 million for Teach for America*
- \$8 million for Virtual Schools*
- \$16.3 million for Advanced Placement Initiative*
- \$6 million for Early College High School*
- \$3 million for T-STEM, down from \$6 million
- \$1.04 billion for IMA, up from \$838 million
- \$40.6 million for the newly created math and reading academies
- \$31.7 million for SSI, down from \$60.5 million
- \$30 million for supplemental funding for pre-K*
- \$118 million for pre-K programs that meet certain requirements

Also included in Article III is funding to pay for business and property tax relief:

- \$2.6 billion for a 25 percent reduction to the franchise tax
- \$1.2 billion to hold districts harmless for the \$10,000 increase to the homestead exemption (\$15,000 to \$25,000).

The annual school district contribution rate for TRS-Care remains at 0.55 percent of total payroll.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 7
Darby
Fractional Funding

Amends numerous statutes impacting various fiscal matters and contains changes related to “fractional funding.” Allows districts that had a compressed tax rate below \$1 to voluntarily shift pennies at the \$31.95 yield from Tier 2 into Tier 1. School boards wishing to shift these pennies must notify the commissioner in writing by September 1 of each of the affected school years. Applies only to the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. Shifting of these pennies will be mandatory for the 2017-18 school year for all districts that are not at the maximum the compressed tax rate.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 114
Flynn
Limits on Issuance of Capital Appreciation Bonds

Prohibits political subdivisions, including school districts, from issuing capital appreciation bonds (CABs) unless certain criteria are met. CABs cannot be secured unless: (1) the bonds have a scheduled maturity date not later than 20 years after issuance; (2) the school district has received a written estimate of the cost of the issuance, which includes the amount of principal and interest to be paid until maturity, the amount of fees to be paid to outside vendors that sell products to be financed by the bond issuance, the amount of fees to be paid to each financing team member, and the projected tax impact of the bonds and the assumptions related to the calculation.

Requires the school board to determine whether a personal or financial relationship exists between members of the board and any financial advisor, bond counsel, bond underwriter, or other professional associated with the bond issuance. Provides that school districts must submit a determination that a relationship exists to the Texas Ethics Commission.

Provides that each school district must post prominently on its website the following information: (1) the total amount of the proposed bonds; (2) the length of the maturity of the bonds; (3) the projects to be financed with the bond proceeds; (4) the intended use of bond proceeds not spent after completion; (5) the total amount of the districts outstanding bonded indebtedness *at the time of the election of the bond*, including the amount of principal and interest to be paid to existing bond debt until maturity; and (6) the total amount of the district’s outstanding bonded indebtedness, including the amount of principal and interest to be paid if the bond passes. Requires school districts to regularly and accurately update debt information on their websites.

Prohibits CABs from being used for certain items unless the item has an expected useful life, as determined by the IRS, that exceeds the bond’s maturity date: (1) items regularly

considered maintenance items such as HVAC replacement units, upgraded plumbing, etc.; or (2) transportation-related items, including buses.

Allows unspent CAB bond proceeds to be used only for those uses specified by the board unless another use is approved by the voters in an election held for that purpose.

The total amount of CABs may not exceed 25 percent of the school district's total outstanding debt at the time of issuance, including the principal and interest to be paid on the outstanding bonds until maturity.

Provides that a school district can extend the maturity date of the bond only if the extension will decrease the total amount of projected principal and interest *or* the maximum legally allowable tax rate for indebtedness has been adopted and TEA certifies in writing that the solvency of the Permanent School Fund's bond guarantee program would be threatened without the extension.

The requirements for issuance do not apply to certain refunding bonds or CABs used for the purpose of financing transportation projects.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 771
Deshotel
Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities

Provides that each student enrolled in the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities at Lamar University is entitled to allotments under Chapter 42 as if it were a school district without a Tier 1 local share for the purposes of Texas Education Code 42.353.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 870
Smith
Investment Training for Treasurer, CFO

Requires the treasurer or the chief financial officer (CFO) (if the treasurer is not the CFO) and the investment officer of a school district to attend an investment training session at least once in a two-year period that begins on the first day of the entity's fiscal year and consists of the two consecutive fiscal years after that date. The training must include at least eight hours of instruction and be from an independent source approved by the board of trustees or by a designated investment committee advising the investment officer.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1474
VanDeaver
Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) Shift to Biennial

Changes the IMA from an annual to a biennial allotment. Requires the comptroller, in connection with installment transfers of funds from the state's general revenue fund, to permit TEA to make temporary transfers from the Foundation School Fund for the payment of IMA.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1551
Howard
Transfers to Permanent School Fund

Requires the School Land Board to adopt rules to establish the procedure for that board to determine the date a transfer will be made and the amount to be transferred from the real estate special fund account of the Permanent School Fund to the Available School Fund or to the SBOE for investment in the Permanent School Fund. Requires the School Land Board, by September 1 of each even-numbered year, to submit to the Legislature, comptroller, SBOE, and Legislative Budget Board a report that specifies in detail the date a transfer will be made and the amount the School Land Board will transfer during the subsequent state fiscal biennium from the real estate special fund account.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2593
Price
Small Schools ADA Adjustment

Provides that certain districts with fewer than 130 students in ADA shall be provided an adjusted basic allotment on the basis of 130 students in ADA if the district offers a K-4 program and has preceding or current year's ADA of at least 75 students or is 30 miles or more by bus route from the nearest high school district. This applies only to a district that does not offer each grade level and that has prospective or former students who generally attend school in a bordering state for the grade levels the district does not offer, that serves both students residing in Texas and students residing in a bordering state who are subsequently eligible for in-state tuition rates at institutions of higher education in either state regardless of the state in which the students reside, and that shares students with an out-of-state district that does not offer competing instructional services.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2660
Howard
ADA for Flexible School Day Programs

Requires the commissioner, in calculating ADA for students served by an optional flexible school day program, to ensure that funding for attendance in a course in that program is based on the same instructional hour requirement of the regular program rather than a full-time equivalent student basis that requires six hours of student conduct time to qualify for a full day of attendance. (Districts would be allowed to earn full-day attendance for students in optional flexible day programs based on 240 minutes of instruction rather than 360 minutes of instruction)

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2826
Murphy
Eligibility of Property in School Districts

Adds Tax Code Section 313.0255 to the Texas Economic Development Act. Applies only to a single unified project located in more than one but not more than three school districts, each of which is contiguous to another district in which the project is located, and at least one of which is a district to which subchapter B applies. Provides direction on how the provisions of subchapter B apply to such a project and how the required minimum amount of qualified investment and minimum amount of limitation on appraised value are determined. In determining whether property on which a project is located meets the eligibility requirements for a limitation on appraised value, the comptroller must consider whether the project as a whole would meet the requirements if it were located at one site in a single school district. Adds Section 313.055 to address how Section 313.0255 applies when the districts involved are subject to subchapter C.

Requires the comptroller to verify a random sample of the data submitted under that section. This section addresses the source of information, size of the sample, and confidentiality of any personal identifying information.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 3062
Clardy
Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program

Amends the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program. Transfers responsibility for administering the program to the Texas Workforce Commission. Allows the commission to award the grant to a school district if the district has entered into a partnership with a public junior college or public technical institute for the purpose of promoting CTE or offering dual-credit courses to the district's students. Provides that a school district may be awarded a grant under this program beginning with the 2016-17 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 810
Seliger
Authority of a District to Contract with a Municipality on Facilities

Allows a school district and a municipality located wholly or partially in the county in which the district is located to contract for the district to contribute resources to pay a portion of the costs of design, improvement, or construction of an instructional facility, stadium, or other athletic facility owned by, on the property of, or under the control of the municipality. Provides that districts can contribute resources only if the district and the municipality have a written agreement authorizing the district to use the facility.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 1760
Creighton
Tax Rate Adoption Above the Effective Rate

Provides that school districts setting a tax rate above the sum of the effective maintenance and operations tax rate as determined by Section 26.08(i), Tax Code, and the district's current debt rate must take a record vote and have at least 60 percent of the full board voting favorably. This change becomes effective January 1, 2016.

Requires notice of tax revenue increases to include a statement regarding the intended purpose of the increase and provides that tax refunds following an appeal have a set 9.5 percent interest rate.

Changes made by this Act apply only to an ad valorem tax year that begins on or after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

HB 18

Aycock

Career Counseling Academies for School Counselors

Other provisions are listed under Accountability (page 6), Assessment (page 21), Curriculum (pages 33-34), and Texas High Performance Schools Consortium (page 68).

Establishes the Center for Teaching and Learning at The University of Texas at Austin (the center) 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.

Mandates that the center solicit input from TEA, school counselors, the Texas Workforce Commission, institutions of higher education, and business, community, and school leaders.

Requires an academy to provide counselors and other postsecondary advisors with knowledge and skills to provide counseling to students regarding postsecondary success and productive career planning including information relating to:

1. course requirements for endorsements
2. available methods for course credit for courses not offered at the school the student attends, e.g., via the Virtual School Network
3. admission requirements for institutions of higher education, including automatic admission requirements
4. regional workforce needs, e.g., education needed for regional jobs, and the salaries or wages earned through regional jobs
5. effective strategies for engaging students and parents in planning for careers, including mentorships and business partnerships

Mandates that the center develop an online instructional program that districts may use in providing instruction in high school, college, and career preparation and requires that the program be structured for use as part of an existing course.

Allows the center access to the P-20/Workforce Data Repository in developing training, instructional programs, and technological tools, and in conducting related evaluations.

Permits a teacher (who provides the instruction as part of an existing CTE course or new elective course) to attend an academy. Entitles a counselor who attends an academy to a stipend from appropriated funds. Permits the center to pay a stipend to a teacher who attends an academy if there are remaining funds available after eligible counselors have received stipends. Prevents the stipend from being considered in determining whether the district is paying the minimum monthly salary.

Allows the center, with appropriated funds, to provide counselors and other educators curricula, instructional materials, and technological tools relating to postsecondary education and career counseling. Requires the center to comply with applicable FERPA provisions.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 133
Schwertner
Mental Health First Aid Training

Changes the types of employees eligible to receive mental health first aid training and related grants to include “school district employees” and “school resource officers,” rather than “educators.”

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2186
Cook
Youth Suicide Prevention Training

Requires staff development provided by a school district to include suicide prevention training to new school district and open-enrollment charter school educators and to existing school district employees on a schedule adopted by TEA. Provides that the training must use a best practice-based program recommended by the Department of State Health Services in coordination with TEA. The training may be satisfied through independent review of training material that complies with TEA guidelines and is offered online.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

STUDENT HEALTH/WELL-BEING

HB 1559

Parker

Online Information on Homeless Student Programs/Services

Requires each school that maintains a website to post information on local programs and services available to assist homeless students. Requires schools to make a good faith effort to compile the information and post it in a format and style that is easily understandable by parents and students.

Allows a representative of a local program to request that information about the program and its services be posted on a school's website, but the school maintains discretion on whether to post the information. Provides that a district is not liable for harm to a student that results in connection with a local program or service included on a district website. These provisions do not apply to a school within a district that has fewer than 3,000 students and is primarily located in a county with a population of less than 50,000. This section expires September 1, 2025.

This act applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 3562

Thompson, Senfronia

Grace Period for Exhausted or Insufficient Meal Card or Account Balance

Also listed under Administration/Operations (page 19).

Requires a school district that allows a student to use a prepaid meal card or account to purchase meals to adopt a grace period policy for situations in which the meal card or account is exhausted or insufficient to continue for a period determined by the district. Provides that the policy must require the school district to notify the parent or person standing in parental relation that the meal card or account is exhausted. Prohibits the district from charging a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased during the grace period. Allows the district to set a repayment schedule as part of the notice to the parent or person standing in parental relation.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 3748**Farney****Coordination of Support Services for Current or Former Children Placed in Foster Care**

Requires TEA to designate at least one agency employee to act as a liaison officer for educational issues related to students in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Requires each institution of higher education to designate at least one employee to act as a liaison officer for current and incoming students at the institution who were formerly in the conservatorship of the DFPS. Requires the THECB to designate at least one employee of that board to act as a liaison officer for current and incoming students at the institution who were formerly in the conservatorship of the DFPS. Requires the DFPS and the THECB to enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding the exchange of information. Provides specific requirements for the memorandum of understanding.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 66**Hinojosa****Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (EpiPens) in Public Schools**

Provides for the establishment, composition, compensation, and duties of an advisory committee that will examine and review the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) to a person experiencing an anaphylactic reaction on a campus of a school district or open-enrollment charter school.

Allows each school district and open-enrollment charter school to adopt and implement a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of EpiPens at each campus in the district or open-enrollment charter school. Provides specific requirements for a policy adopted by a school district or open-enrollment charter school.

Requires the commissioner of state health services, in consultation with the commissioner of education, to adopt rules regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of an EpiPen at a school campus. Requires that each school district or open-enrollment charter school that adopts a policy to have one or more school personnel members or school volunteers authorized and trained to administer an EpiPen present during all hours the campus is open. Requires the supply of EpiPens to be securely stored and accessible to school personnel and volunteers.

Requires the school, not later than the 10th business day after the date a school personnel member or school volunteer administers an EpiPen, to report certain required information to the school district or charter school, the physician or other person who prescribed the EpiPen, the commissioner of education, and the commissioner of state health services.

Requires each school district or open-enrollment charter school that adopts a policy to train school personnel and school volunteers in the administration of an EpiPen. Provides specific requirements for the training.

Allows a physician or person who has been delegated prescriptive authority to prescribe EpiPens in the name of the school district or open-enrollment charter school. Requires a physician to provide the school district or open-enrollment charter with a standing order for the administration of an EpiPen to a person reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis. Provides the content requirements for the order.

Requires a school district or open-enrollment charter that implements a policy to provide written notice to each student enrolled in the district or school.

Allows a school district or open-enrollment charter school to accept gifts, grants, donations, and federal and local funds to implement the requirements of the bill.

Requires the commissioner of education and the commissioner of state health services to jointly adopt rules.

Provides immunity from civil or criminal liability or disciplinary action to any person who in good faith takes, or fails to take, any action under the provisions of the bill. Provides that no civil, criminal, or administrative cause of action or liability is created. Provides immunity from suit to a school district, open-enrollment charter school, school personnel, and school volunteers for an act or failure to act.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 97
Hinojosa
Sale, Possession, and Use of E-Cigarettes

Prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes to persons younger than 18 years of age.

Pursuant to federal law, prohibits a person from selling, giving, or causing to be sold or given an e-cigarette to someone who is younger than 27 years of age unless the person to whom the e-cigarette was sold or given presents an apparently valid proof of identification.

Requires a report on the status of the use of e-cigarettes in this state to be presented to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House of Representatives before the commencement of a regular session of the Texas Legislature. Provides requirements for the contents of the report.

Prohibits the possession, purchase, consumption, or receipt of e-cigarettes by a minor younger than 18 years of age.

Requires the board of trustees of a school district to: prohibit smoking or using e-cigarettes or tobacco products at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property; prohibit students from possessing e-cigarettes or tobacco products at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property; and ensure that school personnel enforce the policies on school property.

Earliest effective date: October 1, 2015

SB 265
Ellis
Student Sunscreen Use

Allows students to possess and use topical sunscreen while on school property or at a school-related event or activity to avoid overexposure to the sun and not for medical treatment of an injury or illness if the product is approved by the FDA for over-the-counter use. Provides that this change does not waive any immunity nor does it create any liability against a school district, its board of trustees, or its employees.

Applies beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

SB 1494
Uresti
Transition Assistance for Homeless Students

Requires TEA to provide transition assistance to homeless students moving from one school to another. Provides that if a grade 11 or 12 student transfers to a different school district and the student is ineligible to graduate from the district to which the student transfers, the district from which the student transferred shall award a diploma at the student's request, if the student meets the graduation requirements of the district from which the student transferred.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

TAXATION

HB 32

Bonnen, Dennis

Reduction of Business Franchise Tax

Reduces the business franchise tax by 25 percent. Requires the comptroller to conduct a comprehensive study to identify the effects of economic growth on future state revenues by September 30, 2016. Requires the results to be reported to the governor and Legislative Budget Board and to identify revenue growth allocation options to promote efficiency and sustainability in meeting the revenue needs of the state, including revenues allocated by Tax Code Section 171.4011, upon the repeal of the franchise tax.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

HB 992

Bonnen, Dennis

Disabled Veteran Homestead Exemption

Requires a constitutional amendment authorizing the Legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran who died before the law authorizing a residence homestead exemption for such a veteran took effect.

Takes effect only if approved by the voters.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

HB 994

Anchia

Landfill Gas Tax Exemption

Permanently exempts from ad valorem taxation property used to collect, compress, transport, process, and deliver gas generated by a landfill. This exemption applies to tangible personal property and provides that the property shall be appraised as tangible property regardless of whether it's affixed to or incorporated into real property.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

HB 1022
Moody
Residence Homestead Definition

Amends the definition of residence homestead to include property occupied by an owner's surviving spouse who has a life estate in the property.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

HB 1261
King, Susan
Comptroller's Report on Tax Provisions

Relates to the comptroller's report of the effect of certain tax provisions. Provides that if actual data is not available, the comptroller is required to use statistical data to estimate the effect of an exemption, discount, exclusion, special valuation, special accounting treatment, special rate, or special method of reporting relating to a tax. If the report states that the effect of a particular tax preference cannot be determined, the comptroller must include in the report a complete explanation of why the comptroller reached that conclusion.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 1463
Raymond
Prohibition of Homestead Exemption Cancellation for Senior Citizens

Prohibits a chief appraiser from cancelling a homestead exemption by an individual who is 65 years of age or older without first providing written notice that includes a form in which an individual may indicate whether the individual is qualified to receive the exemption. Requires the written notice to include a self-addressed prepaid postage envelope with instructions for returning the form to the chief appraiser. Prescribes time periods after which the chief appraiser may cancel the exemption after making a reasonable effort to locate the individual and determine whether the individual is qualified to receive the exemption. Applies only to an action taken by a chief appraiser to cancel a homestead exemption after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2293
Darby
Taxable Value of School District Properties

Requires the comptroller to certify the final taxable value for each school district, appropriately adjusted to give effect to certain provisions of the Education Code related to school funding, to the commissioner as provided by the terms of the memorandum of understanding entered into between the comptroller, the Legislative Budget Board, and the commissioner of education. The change in law made by this Act applies only to a certification made by the comptroller of the adjusted taxable value for a school district to the commissioner on or after the effective date of this Act.

Earliest effective date: January 1, 2016

HB 2313
Bohac
Vending Machine Sales Tax Exemption

Exempts from sales and use taxes the sale of tangible personal property through a vending machine if the sale is made by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that owns the machine and the machine is stocked and maintained by individuals with special needs as part of an independent life skills and education program operated by the program.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 1
Nelson
Homestead Exemption Increase

Provides the enabling legislation for the increase in the homestead exemption of \$10,000 (\$15,000 to \$25,000).

Earliest effective date: Provides numerous effective dates for various provisions

SB 833
Campbell
Homestead Exemption Protection for Traveling Military

Provides that a residence homestead exemption is not lost when the owner temporarily ceases occupying the property if the absence is caused by the owner's military service inside or outside of the state.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM

HB 2

Otto, et al.

Funding for TRS-Care Shortfall

Includes \$768 million to cover the shortfall in TRS-Care.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 1937

Darby

Revocation of Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) Participation

Allows certain members or beneficiaries of TRS who participate in DROP to revoke the decision to participate in the plan on a form prescribed by TRS by December 31, 2015.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2168

Muñoz

Monthly Annuity Payment Date

Provides that monthly annuity payments under TRS are payable on the last working day of the month for which the payment accrues rather than the first working day of the month following the month for which the payment accrues.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

HB 2974

Flynn

Membership Eligibility, Definition of Annual Compensation

Amends various provisions of statute related to TRS. Changes the definition of “annual compensation” to mean the compensation to a TRS member for service during a 12-month period determined by TRS rather than during the school year. Provides that TRS membership can be established only through employment with a single employer on at least a half-time basis.

Provides that the Open Meetings Act does not apply to an assembly of the TRS Board of Trustees or a committee while attending an event held for educational purposes, if the assembly or committee does not deliberate, vote, or take action on a specific matter of public business or policy over which the board or committee has supervision or control.

Creates a joint interim committee to study and review the health benefit plans, including TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare and to examine the following issues: (1) the financial soundness of the plans; (2) the cost and affordability of plan coverage; and (3) the sufficiency and access to physicians and health care providers under the plans. Requires the committee to study the impact of allowing districts to opt of TRS-ActiveCare programs and the impact of establishing regional rating methods for determining premiums.

Provides that the committee is to be composed of three senators appointed by the lieutenant governor and three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker. Requires the committee to report findings and recommendations to the lieutenant governor, speaker, and governor by January 15, 2017.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 940
Taylor, Van
Investment Holdings in Sudan or Iran

Changes the deadline for a state retirement system to notify the state comptroller or the State Pension Review Board regarding investments in Sudan or Iran. Provides that the notice must be given no later than the 30th day after the date the entity receives the list of direct or indirect holdings.

Earliest effective date: September 1, 2015

SB 1940
Huffman
Study of Health Benefit Plans

Creates a joint interim committee to study, review, and propose reforms to the TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare programs. Requires the committee to examine and assess the financial soundness of the plans, the cost of and affordability of plan coverage, and the sufficiency and access to physicians and health care providers under the plans. Requires the committee to report its findings and recommendations to the lieutenant governor, speaker, and governor by January 15, 2017.

Provides that the committee is to be composed of three senators (appointed by the lieutenant governor) and three members of the House of Representatives (appointed by the speaker).

Earliest effective date: Immediately

TEXAS HIGH PERFORMANCE SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM (THPSC) _____

HB 18 **Aycock** **Expansion of the THPSC**

Other provisions listed under Accountability (page 6), Assessment (page 21), Curriculum (pages 33-34), and Staff Development (pages 57-58).

Adds the SBOE to the parties to be informed by the THPSC concerning methods for transforming schools in Texas by improving student learning through the development of innovative next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability systems, including standards and systems relating to career and college readiness.

Allows the commissioner to select up to 30 participants for the THPSC (former maximum was 20). Permits an open-enrollment charter school to be eligible for participation if it was awarded a distinction designation rather than an exemplary distinction designation.

Prevents the number of students enrolled in the THPSC from exceeding 10 percent of the total number of students enrolled in Texas public schools (former cap was at 5 percent).

Shifts reporting responsibility from the commissioner to participating districts and charters. Mandates the reports concerning the performance and progress of the THPSC be submitted to the governor, the Legislature, the SBOE, and the commissioner by December 1 of each even-numbered year. Deletes language regarding the content of the reports.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

HB 2804 **Aycock** **Texas High Performance Schools Consortium Role on Accountability Commission**

Other provisions listed under Accountability (pages 8-11).

Requires the establishment of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability to develop and make recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public school accountability. Mandates the commission be composed of 15 members (including an educator in a school district that participates in the THPSC) including 10 members appointed: by the governor (four), the lieutenant governor (three), and the speaker of the House (three). Requires the commission to deliver its report that recommends statutory changes to the governor and Legislature by September 1, 2016. Mandates that the commission consider the recommendations of the THPSC related to innovative, next-generation learning standards and assessment and accountability

systems when preparing the commission report. Abolishes the commission January 1, 2017.

Applies this section with the effective date of this bill.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

UIL/ EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

HB 1040

Paddie

Liability of Sports Officials

Removes the liability of sports officials who officiate, judge, or enforce contest rules within an official capacity at an athletic competition for civil damages, including personal injury, or other losses due to risks inherent to the competitive activity unless due to gross negligence or wanton, willful, or intentional misconduct.

Earliest effective date: Immediately

84th Legislative Session
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Texas Association of School Administrators

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