

- SUBJECT:** Expanding certain powers and duties of public school governing bodies
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Huberty, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Gooden, K. King, Koop, Meyer, VanDeaver
- 1 nay — Bernal
- 1 absent — Dutton
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 26 — 29-2 (Hall, Zaffirini), on Local and Uncontested Calendar
- WITNESSES:** For — Phil Gore, Texas Association of School Boards; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kristi Hassett and Krona Thimesch, Lewisville ISD Columba Wilson)
- Against — Steve Swanson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Anderson, Arlington ISD Board of Trustees; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance)
- On — Silvia Martinez; (*Registered, but did not testify*: AJ Crabill, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that too few school boards and charter school governing bodies have been able to take advantage of recent technological advances and new governance strategies for improving oversight of school district operations and student achievement. Some suggest providing an online tool could provide the opportunity to leverage those advances and strategies.
- DIGEST:** SB 1566 would revise certain powers and duties of public school boards and the governing bodies of open-enrollment charter schools, including giving them data to measure the academic achievement and tools to improve board oversight.

**Academic achievement.** The bill would specify that a school board or governing body of an open-enrollment charter school would be required to provide oversight regarding student academic achievement and strategic leadership for maximizing student performance.

The Texas Education Agency, by request of the board of trustees of an independent school district, would be required to create a website that board members and campus personnel could use to review campus and district academic achievement data.

District information would be updated quarterly and sorted by campus, grade, sex, race, academic quarter or semester, and school year in the following categories:

- student academic achievement and growth;
- teacher and student attendance; and
- student discipline records.

The information provided would allow a board member to compare the district's academic performance with that of peers. Districts would be required to provide requested information to the commissioner for this purpose in a manner that protected confidential data while still allowing public access to public information.

TEA could contract with a private entity if necessary to meet these requirements, and the commissioner would be authorized to adopt rules.

**Board improvement and evaluation tool.** The bill would require the commissioner to develop a board of trustees improvement and evaluation tool, which would be research-based and designed to assist a school district in improving board oversight and academic achievement.

A school board could determine whether to use the evaluation tool. If the district was subject to interventions or sanctions related to deficiencies in accreditation status or unsatisfactory academic performance or financial

accountability, the commissioner could order the district to use the tool.

The bill would make certain other changes to the powers and duties of boards and governing bodies, including that it would:

- require a school board member to complete at least three hours of training provided every two years by the State Board of Education on evaluating student academic performance.
- authorize a school board to require certain district staff, including the chief business official or curriculum director, to appear at an executive session of the board or to testify at a public hearing; and
- establish deadlines that districts would have to follow in providing information to a member of the board of trustees on request.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.