

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 582

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .190774.3

Short Title: School District Family Engagement Programs

Sponsor(s): Senator Linda M. Lopez and Representative Rick S. Miera, and Others

Analyst: James Ball

Date: March 6, 2013

Bill Summary:

SB 582 creates a new section in the *Public School Code* which may be cited as the *Family Engagement Act* (FEA). The goals of the FEA are to:

- engage families from diverse cultures in their children's education;
- inform families that they can affect the success of their children's learning and offer techniques and strategies to improve children's academic success; and
- integrate family engagement into schools' master plans for academic accountability.

SB 582 also creates the Family Engagement Council (FEC) as an advisory council to the Public Education Department (PED). The duties of the council are to:

- develop an evaluation instrument or process to assess local school district family engagement programs (FEP);
- identify effective FEPs;
- make recommendations for training programs;
- facilitate FEP coordination among school officials, parents, families, educators, and community leaders;
- coordinate PED services with other state agencies; and
- serve as a champion for students in building community support for schools and encourage community participation in public schools.

The FEC shall consist of nine members serving staggered three-year terms, as follows:

- one representative of a statewide family-teacher organization;
- two family members or guardians of students enrolled in public schools;
- two public school teachers;
- one public school administrator;
- one local school board member;
- one business community representative; and
- one PED employee, who shall chair the council.

SB 582 further requires that each local school board establish an FEP for each school in the district that shall:

- ensure involvement of parents and families in the planning, design, and implementation of the FEP for their school;
- provide for regular and periodic learning opportunities for families and school personnel throughout the school year;
- prepare an annual statement identifying specific objectives of the FEP; and
- conduct an annual review and assessment of progress on the FEP in meeting its objectives.

The bill also lists eight additional characteristics and components that may be desirable in designing FEPs.

Fiscal Impact:

SB 582 does not contain an appropriation.

Substantive Issues:

According to PED, the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and its reauthorizations through the years, including the *No Child Left Behind Act*, have mandated that states and school districts facilitate parent engagement in education. Research clearly establishes the significant role of parent engagement in the educational success of schools and students.

Technical Issues:

SB 582 does not indicate who shall be responsible for appointing members of the FAC.

SB 582 requires that each local school board establish an FEP for each school in the district following specific criteria set forth in the FEA. This provision may conflict with existing statute outlining the powers and duties of local school boards and those of superintendents. Local school boards are charged with developing policies for the district. Superintendents are considered chief executive officers who administer and supervise programs in the schools. It would appear that it could be the duty of superintendents rather than local school boards to establish FEPs for each school in the district.

Background:

PED further states that SB 582 relates to the education reform initiatives adopted by the Legislature in 2003, which contain provisions for district- and school-level parent councils. SB 582 further defines the family engagement programs and the role of parents in schools. In the past, PED has had an *ad hoc* advisory council that has provided the agency with an annual white paper with parental involvement recommendations.

Committee Referrals:

SRC/SEC

Related Bills:

SB 179aa *Community Schools Act*
HB 542 *Community Schools Act*