

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SB 6570

Title: An act relating to judicial authority in truancy petitions.

Brief Description: Providing additional judicial authority in truancy petitions.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Costa and Long.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340)

Background: The compulsory attendance law requires children at least 8 years old and under 18 years old to attend public school unless the child is receiving home-based instruction, is attending an approved private school, is attending an education center, is excused by the school district, or is 16 years old and is emancipated. A 6 or 7 year old who has enrolled in public school is also required to attend.

If a child has the responsibility but fails to attend school without justification, the school must take certain actions, including notifying the parent, scheduling a parent conference, and other steps to reduce the child's absences. If the efforts of the school and the parents do not reduce the child's absences, the school district must file a truancy petition with the juvenile court no later than the seventh unexcused absence in a month or the 10th unexcused absence during a school year.

Juvenile courts hearing truancy petitions may order a truant minor to meet court imposed obligations, including attending school and being tested for use of controlled substances.

Summary of Bill: Juvenile courts may set minimum school attendance requirements, including the authority to deal with suspensions. Juvenile courts are granted explicit authority to order a minor, who has tested positive for drug or alcohol use, to abstain from further use of controlled substances and alcohol.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.