

By: Bohac

H.B. No. 729

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to instruction in positive character traits in public schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 29.906, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 29.906. CHARACTER TRAITS INSTRUCTION [~~EDUCATION PROGRAM~~]. (a) The State Board of Education shall integrate positive character traits into the essential knowledge and skills adopted for kindergarten through grade 12, as appropriate [~~A school district may provide a character education program~~].

(b) The State Board of Education must include the following [~~A character education program under this section must:~~

[~~(1) stress~~] positive character traits [~~, such as~~]:

(1) [~~(A)~~] courage;

(2) [~~(B)~~] trustworthiness, including honesty, reliability, punctuality, and loyalty;

(3) [~~(C)~~] integrity;

(4) [~~(D)~~] respect and courtesy;

(5) [~~(E)~~] responsibility, including accountability, diligence, perseverance, and self-control;

(6) [~~(F)~~] fairness, including justice and freedom from prejudice;

(7) [~~(G)~~] caring, including kindness, empathy,

1 compassion, consideration, patience, generosity, and charity;

2 (8) [~~(H)~~] good citizenship, including patriotism,
3 concern for the common good and the community, and respect for
4 authority and the law; [~~and~~]

5 (9) [~~(I)~~] school pride; and

6 (10) gratitude[~~+~~

7 ~~[(2) use integrated teaching strategies; and~~

8 ~~[(3) be age appropriate].~~

9 (c) The State Board of Education shall create a report that
10 identifies the manner in which the character traits listed under
11 Subsection (b) have been integrated into the curriculum. The board
12 shall make the report publicly available on the board's Internet
13 website.

14 (d) Each school district and open-enrollment charter school
15 must adopt a character education program that includes the positive
16 character traits listed in Subsection (b). The district or
17 open-enrollment charter school shall submit the adopted program to
18 the agency annually, in a manner determined by the commissioner.

19 (e) In developing or selecting a character education
20 program under this section, a school district shall consult with a
21 committee selected by the district that consists of:

22 (1) parents of district students;

23 (2) educators; and

24 (3) other members of the community, including
25 community leaders.

26 (f) [~~(d)~~] This section does not require or authorize
27 proselytizing or indoctrinating concerning any specific religious

1 or political belief.

2 (g) [~~(e)~~] The agency shall:

3 (1) maintain a list of character education programs
4 that school districts have implemented that meet the criteria under
5 Subsection (b); and

6 (2) using the services of a center for education
7 research established under Section 1.005, and based on data
8 reported by districts, annually designate as a Character Plus
9 School each school that provides a character education program
10 that:

11 (A) meets the criteria prescribed by Subsection
12 (b); [~~and~~]

13 (B) is approved by the committee selected under
14 Subsection (e) [~~(e)~~]; and

15 (C) demonstrates a correlation between the
16 character education program adopted by the school, an increase in
17 student attendance levels, and a decrease in student disciplinary
18 problems [~~(3) include in the report required under Section 39.332.~~]

19 [~~(A) based on data reported by districts, the~~
20 ~~impact of character education programs on student discipline and~~
21 ~~academic achievement, and~~

22 [~~(B) other reported data relating to character~~
23 ~~education programs the agency considers appropriate for~~
24 ~~inclusion].~~

25 (h) [~~(f)~~] The agency may accept money from [~~federal~~
26 ~~government and~~] private sources to use in assisting school
27 districts in implementing character education programs that meet

1 the criteria prescribed by Subsection (b).

2 (i) The State Board of Education may adopt rules as
3 necessary to implement this section.

4 SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2017-2018
5 school year.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.