

Senate Bill (SB) 1952

Sen. Angela Paxton



Administration of School Health and Related Services (SHARS)

SB 1952 would designate the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) as the sole agency responsible for administering the SHARS program in the state. HHSC would oversee the participation of local education agencies in the program. This includes providing them with training and guidance, and collaborating with regional service centers to support schools in delivering Medicaid-funded services to students. The bill would also require HHSC and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to enter into a memorandum of understanding to clearly define each agency's role in the operation of SHARS.



SHARS is a Medicaid program that allows public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to receive federal reimbursement for certain services provided to Medicaid-eligible students with disabilities. These students must meet the requirements for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Eligible services include physical therapy, speech therapy, transportation, and more.



In Texas, the oversight of SHARS is a cooperative effort between two agencies. HHSC oversees Medicaid policy and billing provisions, while TEA monitors activities to ensure adherence to Medicaid standards and quality student services. Some feel that the divided oversight leads to inefficiencies for schools navigating requirements from both agencies.



A 2017 audit found that Texas was improperly billing for services that were not covered by SHARS. After this finding, the federal government required Texas to return \$19 million in program funds. Since then, the state has used stricter guidelines for approval. This has resulted in an additional loss of \$607 million per year to schools and a massive gap in special education resources.



“SB 1952 is a critical step to protect and strengthen the services our schools provide to students with special needs. This legislation helps safeguard vital funding and ensures that resources reach the students who need them most.”

Sen. Angela Paxton, Author of SB 1952