

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 933
By: Shapiro
Education
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, some parents have left the public school system for private schools or home schools, but might return if they were offered the support of a content-rich curriculum, adaptive lessons, and certified teachers without losing the flexibility of home-based learning. As proposed, S.B. 933 establishes virtual charter schools that utilize technology to deliver instruction through the internet or in virtual or remote setting; permits public colleges and universities to operate virtual schools that meet state standards and assess students' academic performance at least once a week; allows students to work at an individualized pace that does not prohibit any student from working at a different grade level in any subject; evaluates virtual charter schools annually on student achievement through the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and evaluates the fiscal and operation performance of schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 5 (Section 12.153(d), Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the commissioner of education is modified in SECTION 5 (Section 12.153(e), Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Authorizes this Act to be cited as the Virtual Charter Schools Act.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 12.002, Education Code, to include Subchapter E as part of the chapters that covers the classes of charter, under this chapter of the Education Code.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 12.151, Education Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 12.151. New heading: DEFINITIONS. Defines "educational activities," "public senior college or university charter school," and "virtual charter school." Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 12.152, Education Code, by adding Subsection (b), to authorize the State Board of Education (SBOE) to grant a charter on the application of a public senior college or university for a virtual charter school, in accordance with this subchapter and Subchapter D.

SECTION 5. Amends Sections 12.153 and 12.154, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 12.153. RULES. (a) Requires each virtual charter school to meet certain requirements.

(b) Requires an administrative office maintained by a virtual charter school according to Subsection (a)(8) to be considered the principal place of business of the virtual charter school.

(c) Prohibits a virtual charter school from taking certain actions.

(d) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to adopt rules to implement the requirements for virtual charter school under Subsections (a), (b), and (c).

(e) Authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules to implement any other provision of this chapter.

Sec. 12.154. CONTENT. Authorizes (SBOE) to grant a charter under this subchapter only if the public senior college's or university's application meets certain criteria, as determined by the (SBOE), notwithstanding Section 12.110(d). Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 6. Amends Section 12.156(a), Education Code, to make a conforming change.

SECTION 7. Amends Chapter 12E, Education Code, by adding Section 12.157, as follows:

Sec. 12.157. ANNUAL EVALUATION OF VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOLS. (a) Requires each public senior college or university sponsoring a virtual charter school under this subchapter to perform an annual evaluation of the virtual charter school, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 12.118

(b) Requires an evaluation under Subsection (a) to include an analysis of certain performance and achievement measures.

SECTION 8. Effective date: September 1, 2003.