

By: Castro

H.B. No. 3474

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study of an existing education voucher pilot program.

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

SECTION 1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Act is to study the beneficial or harmful results on participating students, on students remaining in the public school system and on the taxpayers of the affected district, of the voucher program established in San Antonio with private funds for the benefit of students residing within the Edgewood Independent School District.

SECTION 2. STUDY DESIGN. The commissioner of education will contract with one or more individuals or organizations that have substantial experience in the study of educational performance and finance and that have not advocated and are not affiliated with any organization that has advocated either for or against the adoption of public school vouchers. The consultants will study, at a minimum:

The educational performance of a statistically valid sample of students who have participated in the voucher program in comparison to their performance prior to participation in the program and to the performance of demographically similar students who remained in the public school system;

The experience of students who participated in the voucher program and then returned to the public schools, including their reasons for participating and returning, a comparison of the

1 educational program in which they participated in the voucher
2 program to the program in which their demographically similar
3 classmates who remained in the public schools participated, the
4 relative educational attainment they achieved while in the voucher
5 program compared to the attainments achieved by those classmates
6 and analyses from their teachers of their relative preparedness to
7 participate at grade level upon their return to the public schools;

8 The financial impact upon the public school district of the
9 loss of students to the voucher programming, including a comparison
10 of state funds lost to the ability of the district to achieve
11 commensurate cost savings due to the reduction in the number of
12 students served, both in aggregate and at the individual campus and
13 classroom level;

14 The utilization of the voucher funds by the participating
15 private schools, including the proportionate expenditures for
16 classroom and administrative expenses and profit or excess of funds
17 received for that student over funds expended, if any, together
18 with a comparison with those same proportionate expenditures in the
19 public school system from which the students came;

20 The financial and managerial stability of the private schools
21 that participated in the voucher program;

22 Guidelines and methodology for assuring the appropriate
23 usage of public funds given to private entities under a voucher
24 program;

25 Methodologies for monitoring and measuring relative student
26 performance under a voucher program to assure appropriate academic
27 achievement by voucher program participants; and

1 A methodology for determining an appropriate voucher level
2 for each particular student based on the variations in expenditures
3 resulting from grade level, physical, educational and demographic
4 differences between students.

5 SECTION 3. STUDY DESIGN. The commissioner, in consultation
6 with the school district or districts whose students participate in
7 the pilot program, shall evaluate the program and report the
8 evaluation, together with recommendations, to the legislature not
9 later than December 1, 2006.

10 SECTION 4. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September
11 1, 2007

12 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
13 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
14 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
15 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
16 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.