

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2399  
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Public Safety  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently in Texas, an applicant for a driver's license who is under 18 years of age must take a comprehensive driver education course. The applicant can choose to take the course either from a licensed driver training school, from a school district, open-enrollment charter school, or public or private institution of higher education, or from the applicant's parent, step-parent, legal guardian, step-grandparent, or grandparent.

The comprehensive course has both a classroom phase and a behind the wheel phase. Under existing Texas law, a comprehensive course offered in a high school or a parent-taught course may offer the classroom phase by an alternative method, such as an online course. A driving training school cannot offer the classroom phase by an alternative method.

H.B. 2399 authorizes a driver education school to teach all or part of the classroom portion of an approved driver education course by an alternative method of instruction that does not require students to be present in a classroom if the commissioner of education approves the alternative method.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2399 amends the Education Code to authorize a driver education school to teach all or part of the classroom portion of an approved driver education course by an alternative method of instruction that does not require students to be present in a classroom if the commissioner of education approves the alternative method. The bill authorizes the commissioner to approve the alternative method only if the alternative method includes testing and security measures that the commissioner determines are at least as secure as the measures available in the usual classroom setting and if the course, with the use of the alternative method, satisfies any other requirement applicable to a course in which the classroom portion is taught to students in the usual classroom setting. The bill authorizes the commissioner to establish a fee for an application for approval to offer a driver education course by an alternative method of instruction in an amount the commissioner considers appropriate, not to exceed the amount sufficient to cover the costs of considering the application.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.