

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 276
By: Watson
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties identify dropout recovery as a critical issue for Texas that directly influences the creation of an educated and productive workforce. S.B. 276 seeks to increase the enrollment and graduation rates of high school dropouts and provide students with resources and training that will help maximize their potential by, among other things, removing the cap on the number of students who may attend an adult high school diploma and industry certification charter school program.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 276 amends the Education Code to clarify that, with regard to the authorization for a charter under the adult high school diploma and industry certification charter school pilot program to be granted to a qualified single nonprofit entity to provide an adult education program for eligible individuals, the commissioner of education grants the charter. The bill removes the cap on such a program's capacity of 150 program-eligible individuals. These provisions take effect only if a specific appropriation is provided for additional funding for the increase in the number of program participants above 150 in a general appropriations act of the 85th Legislature.

S.B. 276 specifies that the specific, objective standards for receiving a high school diploma required to be established by a charter granted under the pilot program include the successful completion of, if applicable to the program participant, high school curriculum requirements or the appropriate curriculum requirements applicable to the program participant.

S.B. 276 subjects an adult education program operated under a charter granted under the pilot program to a statutory provision relating to public education and establishing a criminal offense and a prohibition, restriction, or requirement, as applicable, imposed by statutory provisions relating to public education or a rule adopted under such provisions relating to the following: the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to the extent necessary as determined by the commissioner to monitor compliance with provisions relating to the pilot program and, as applicable, statutory provisions relating to open-enrollment charter schools; criminal history records; high school graduation requirements to the extent applicable to a program participant; special education programs; bilingual education; health and safety; the requirement to report an educator's misconduct; and the right of an employee to report a crime.

S.B. 276 requires the commissioner to develop and adopt performance frameworks that establish standards by which to measure the performance of an adult high school program operated under a charter granted under the pilot program in a manner consistent with the applicable requirements provided for an open-enrollment charter school. The bill requires the commissioner to annually evaluate the performance of an adult high school program operated under a pilot program charter based on the applicable performance frameworks, applicable beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, and to include in the performance frameworks the following performance indicators: the percentage of program participants who performed satisfactorily on the standardized secondary exit-level test for adult education program participants; the percentage of program participants who successfully completed the high school program and earned a high school diploma; the percentage of program participants who successfully completed career and technology education courses and obtained industry certification; the percentage of program participants who have enrolled in a public, private, or independent institution of higher education; and the percentage of program participants who earned a wage, salary, or other income increase that was significant as determined and reported by the Texas Workforce Commission.

S.B. 276 requires the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to implement and administer the bill's reporting requirement with regard to PEIMS and the bill's performance frameworks evaluation provisions. The bill authorizes the commissioner or an adult education program operated under a charter granted as part of the pilot program to accept gifts, grants, or donations from any public or private source to be used for purposes of the pilot program.

S.B. 276 repeals Section 29.259(1), Education Code, which requires TEA to prepare and deliver a biennial report that evaluates any adult education program operated under a pilot program charter and makes recommendations regarding the abolishment, continuation, or expansion of the pilot program.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.