

By: Miles, Burton

S.B. No. 677

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a task force to identify opportunities for academic credit and industry recognition for inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 19, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 19.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 19.012. TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC CREDIT AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION. (a) The Windham School District, in consultation with the department, shall establish a task force to review the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage.

(b) The task force is composed of the following eight members:

(1) two representatives of the department designated by the executive director of the department;

(2) one representative of the district designated by the superintendent of the district;

(3) one representative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designated by the commissioner of higher education;

(4) one representative of the Texas Workforce Commission designated by the executive director of the commission;

(5) one representative of a private vendor operating a

correctional facility under a contract with the department,  
appointed by the governor;

(6) one representative of a public junior college, as  
defined by Section 61.003, appointed by the governor; and

(7) one representative of a faith-based organization,  
appointed by the governor.

(c) The governor shall designate a member of the task force  
to serve as presiding officer.

(d) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same  
manner as the initial appointment.

(e) The task force may accept gifts and grants from any  
source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

(f) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call  
of the presiding officer and at other times as determined by the  
presiding officer.

(g) The task force shall:

(1) conduct an ongoing comprehensive review of the  
work or other productive activities in which persons confined or  
imprisoned in the department engage; and

(2) identify opportunities for the award of high  
school credit, college credit, or joint high school and college  
credit, or the award of an industry-recognized credential or  
certificate, for engaging in that work or activity.

(h) The district, in consultation with the department, the  
Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating  
Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission, shall for any type of  
work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified

1 under Subsection (g), determine the actions necessary for obtaining  
2 the award of the applicable academic credit or industry  
3 recognition.

4 (i) Not less than once every four years, the task force  
5 shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker  
6 of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the  
7 legislature having jurisdiction over the department a report that  
8 summarizes the review conducted under Subsection (g) and the  
9 district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic  
10 credit or industry recognition under Subsection (h). The district  
11 shall provide the task force with any information necessary to  
12 complete the report.

13 (j) Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not apply to the  
14 task force established under this section.

15 (k) The task force shall submit the first report required  
16 under Subsection (i) not later than December 31, 2020. This  
17 subsection expires February 1, 2021.

18 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2017, the executive  
19 director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the  
20 superintendent of the Windham School District, the commissioner of  
21 higher education, the executive director of the Texas Workforce  
22 Commission, and the governor shall appoint members to the task  
23 force established by Section 19.012, Education Code, as added by  
24 this Act, in the manner required by Subsection (b) of that section.

25 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.