

By: Miles

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 seven 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; and

(6) one representative of a public junior college, as
defined by Section 61.003, 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) A member of the task force may not receive compensation
for service on the task force, but is entitled to reimbursement for
actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing task force
duties.

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

(g) 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.

(h) 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.

(i) The district, in consultation with the department, the
Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating

1 Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission, shall for any type of
2 work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified
3 under Subsection (h), determine the actions necessary for obtaining
4 the award of the applicable academic credit or industry
5 recognition.

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

15 (k) Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not apply to the
16 task force established under this section.

17 (l) The task force shall submit the first report required
18 under Subsection (j) not later than December 31, 2020. This
19 subsection expires February 1, 2021.

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

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