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By:  Hughes S.B. No. 1654

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to studies concerning public school employee and retiree health coverage.

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

SECTION 1.  SCHOOL EMPLOYEE AND RETIRED EMPLOYEE HEALTH COVERAGE STUDIES. (a) Each regional education service center established under Chapter 8, Education Code, shall study the health coverage provided to:

(1)  the employees of school districts and open-enrollment charter schools located in the region served by the regional education service center; and

(2)  the retired employees of school districts and open-enrollment charter schools located in the region served by the regional education service center.

(b)  Each study must:

(1)  address whether, in lieu of the health coverage provided by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas under Chapters 1575 and 1579, Insurance Code, as applicable, it would be feasible and advisable to provide health coverage in another manner;

(2)  consider the feasibility and advisability of a variety of options for providing alternative health coverage, including coverage offered:

(A)  by the regional education service center for all school districts and open-enrollment charter schools located in the region;

(B)  jointly by groups of school districts and open-enrollment charter schools located in the region for each district and school participating in a group;

(C)  by individual school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in the region for the districts' and schools' employees or retired employees, as applicable; and

(D)  in a combination of the options described by Paragraphs (A)-(C) of this subdivision;

(3)  address whether alternative health coverage could be provided at a cost savings to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, employees or retired employees, as applicable, and the state;

(4)  separately address issues relating to alternative health coverage for districts' and schools' employees or retired employees; and

(5)  identify possible barriers to implementation of an alternative health coverage program.

(c)  The Teacher Retirement System of Texas shall study the transfer of health coverage from the group programs under Chapters 1575 and 1579, Insurance Code, as applicable, to alternative health coverage as described by Subsection (b) of this section. In conducting the study, the retirement system shall address the same matters as are addressed by each regional education service center.

SECTION 2.  REPORTS. Not later than January 31, 2020, each regional education service center and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas shall submit a report of the results of the studies conducted under this Act, together with any recommendations resulting from the studies, to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the house and senate with jurisdiction over insurance and education.

SECTION 3.  EXPIRATION. This Act expires September 1, 2021.

SECTION 4.  EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.