

By: Martinez

H.B. No. 1640

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing a pilot program to employ a life skills counselor at public high school campuses in certain counties.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 33, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 33.010 to read as follows:

Sec. 33.010. LIFE SKILLS COUNSELOR PILOT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Crime of violence" has the meaning assigned by Article 59.01, Code of Criminal Procedure.

(2) "Pilot program" means the life skills counselor pilot program established under this section.

(b) This section applies only to a county that:

(1) is adjacent to:

(A) at least two counties that border the Gulf of Mexico; and

(B) at least two counties that are located on the international border; and

(2) is located within 50 miles of a county described by Subdivision (1).

(c) The commissioner shall establish a life skills counselor pilot program at each high school campus located in a county subject to this section as a strategy for addressing emotional and mental health concerns of students.

1 (d) A school district located in a county subject to this
2 section shall employ for each district high school campus located
3 in the county a school counselor certified under Subchapter B,
4 Chapter 21, to serve as a life skills counselor under the pilot
5 program.

6 (e) A life skills counselor employed to serve at a high
7 school campus under this section shall:

8 (1) collaborate with school district administrators,
9 school counselors, social workers, other appropriately
10 credentialed mental health professionals, and local law
11 enforcement agencies to address mental health concerns affecting
12 students at the high school campus;

13 (2) provide instruction to students enrolled at the
14 high school campus relating to skills and techniques to cope with
15 anxiety, frustration, and other emotions;

16 (3) counsel any students enrolled at the high school
17 campus who have committed a crime of violence or are identified as
18 having a mental health condition; and

19 (4) establish a voluntary counseling program for
20 students enrolled at the high school campus.

21 (f) A school district located in a county subject to this
22 section may solicit and accept a gift, grant, or donation from any
23 source, including a foundation, private entity, governmental
24 entity, or institution of higher education to implement or
25 administer the pilot program.

26 (g) Not later than January 1, 2025, the commissioner shall
27 review the pilot program established under this section and submit

1 to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house
2 of representatives, and the presiding officer of each legislative
3 standing committee with primary jurisdiction over primary and
4 secondary education a written report regarding the progress made by
5 the pilot program in addressing emotional and mental health
6 concerns of students.

7 (h) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to
8 administer the pilot program.

9 (i) This section expires September 1, 2025.

10 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than December 1, 2019, the
11 commissioner of education shall adopt rules necessary to implement
12 and administer the life skills counselor pilot program established
13 under Section 33.010, Education Code, as added by this Act.

14 (b) The life skills counselor pilot program established
15 under Section 33.010, Education Code, as added by this Act, shall be
16 implemented in each public high school located in a county subject
17 to that section beginning with the 2020-2021 school year.

18 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.