

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1647
By: Parker
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current statute, a public school district may use a private or public community-based dropout recovery program for students who are at risk of dropping out of school. However, current programs have limits on the types of recovery programs available to students. S.B. 1647 seeks to expand the types of programs available by allowing districts and charter schools to use a public or private community-based dropout recovery education program or education management organization to provide alternative education programs for students who are deemed by administrators, counselors, or teachers as being at high risk of dropping out of school. The program may be offered in person at a campus, remotely, or through a hybrid of in-person and remote instruction. The bill also specifies requirements for dropout recovery education programs.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1647 amends the Education Code to revise statutory provisions authorizing a public school district to use a dropout recovery program for the purposes of providing alternative education programs for students at risk of dropping out of school as follows:

- provides for the option of using a private or public community-based education management organization for such purposes as an alternative to using a private or public community-based dropout recovery education program;
- extends the authorization to use such a dropout recovery program or organization to provide alternative education programs for those students to an open-enrollment charter school; and
- replaces the authorization for such alternative education programs to be offered through the use of an online program that leads to a high school diploma and prepares the student to enter the workforce with an authorization for such programs to be offered remotely or through a hybrid of in-person and remote instruction.

The bill makes the requirements under existing law for an online dropout recovery education program applicable instead to a remote or hybrid dropout recovery education program, includes providing a monthly report to the student's charter school regarding the student's progress in those requirements, and additionally requires a remote or hybrid dropout recovery program to operate an in-person student engagement center at a location suitable for high school students.

The bill specifies that requirements for a campus-based dropout recovery education program under existing law apply to an in-person program.

S.B. 1647 authorizes a dropout recovery education program to be operated only by an entity that is accredited by the Texas Education Agency or a regional accrediting agency. The bill requires such a program to offer or provide referrals for mental health services to students enrolled in the program and prohibits the program from marketing directly to students enrolled in a traditional education program. The bill authorizes a district or charter school to operate one campus-based dropout recovery education program for all students in the district or charter school and authorizes a district or charter school administrator or school counselor to refer a student to a dropout recovery education program if the administrator or counselor determines that enrollment in the program could prevent the student from dropping out of school. The bill requires a district or charter school each year to post on its website a report on measurable outcomes for each dropout recovery education program offered by the district or school that includes the percentage of students enrolled in the program during the preceding school year who attained each of the following outcomes:

- transfer to a traditional education program;
- successful completion of the program;
- dual credit; or
- a credential of value.

S.B. 1647 replaces the requirement for the commissioner of education to include students in attendance in a dropout recovery education program in the computation of the district's average daily attendance (ADA) for funding purposes with a requirement for the commissioner to include a student who successfully completes a course offered through such a program in the computation of the district's or charter school's ADA for funding purposes. The bill requires the commissioner, for a student who successfully completes a remote course offered through the program, to include the student in the computation of the district's or charter school's ADA with an attendance rate equal to the district's or school's average attendance rate for students successfully completing a course offered in person under the program or, if the district or school does not offer courses in person under the program, the statewide average attendance rate for students successfully completing a course offered in person under such a program.

S.B. 1647 authorizes an entity that operates a dropout recovery education program to administer an applicable statewide standardized test or end-of-course test on any date selected by the entity that falls within a testing window established in accordance with applicable statutory provisions for the administration of the test. The bill's provisions apply beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.