

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1647
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

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 and limit the scope to only public school districts, leaving out open-enrollment charters.

S.B. 1647 seeks to amend Section 29.081, Education Code, to allow school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to use public or private community-based dropout recovery education programs to provide an alternative for students who are deemed by administrators, counselors, or teachers as being at high-risk. The program may be offered in person at a campus, remotely, or through a hybrid of in-person and remote instruction. The bill sets out specific requirements for in-person, remote, and hybrid programs and also mandates that dropout recovery education programs offer or provide referrals for mental health services to students enrolled in the program.

For the purpose of funding, S.B. 1647 mandates that the commissioner include a student who successfully completes a course offered through a program under Subsection (e) in the computation of the district's or school's average daily attendance with a 100 percent attendance rate. To track outcomes, each year, a school district or open-enrollment charter shall post a report on measurable outcomes and must include the percentages of students enrolled during the preceding school year:

1. Transferred to a traditional education program;
2. Successfully completed the program;
3. Students who attained dual credit; or
4. Attained a credential of value.

Lastly, S.B. 1647 allows an entity that operates a dropout recovery program under Section 29.081 to administer an assessment instrument on any date selected by that entity.

As proposed, S.B. 1647 amends current law relating to dropout recovery education programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 29.081, Education Code, by amending Subsections (e), (e-1), (e-2), and (f) and adding Subsections (e-3), (e-4), (e-5), and (e-6), as follows:

(e) Authorizes a school district or open-enrollment charter school to use a private or public community-based dropout recovery education program or education management organization to provide alternative education programs for students at risk of dropping out of school. Authorizes the program to be offered in person at a campus, remotely, or through a hybrid of in-person and remote instruction, rather than offered at a campus or through the use of an Internet online program that leads to a high school diploma and prepares the student to enter the workforce. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(e-1) Requires that an in-person, campus-based dropout recovery education program take certain actions, including employing as teachers only persons certified under Subchapter B (Certification of Educators), Chapter 21, rather than employ as faculty and administrators persons with baccalaureate or advanced degrees.

(e-2) Requires that a remote or hybrid dropout recovery education program, rather than an Internet online dropout recovery education program, take certain actions, including operating an in-person student engagement center at a location suitable for high school students. Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

(e-3) Provides that a dropout recovery education program under Subsection (e):

(1) is authorized to be operated only by an entity that is accredited by the Texas Education Agency or a regional accrediting agency;

(2) is required to offer or provide referrals for mental health services to students enrolled in the program; and

(3) is prohibited from marketing directly to students enrolled in a traditional education program.

(e-4) Authorizes a school district or open-enrollment charter school to operate one campus-based dropout recovery education program under Subsection (e) for all students in the district or school.

(e-5) Authorizes a school district or open-enrollment charter school administrator or school counselor to refer a student to a dropout recovery education program under Subsection (e) if the administrator or counselor determines that enrollment in the program could prevent the student from dropping out of school.

(e-6) Requires a school district or open-enrollment charter school, each year, to post on the district's or school's Internet website a report on measurable outcomes for each dropout recovery education program under Subsection (e) offered by the district or school. Requires that the report include 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.

(f) Requires the commissioner of education to include a student who successfully completes a course offered through a program, rather than to include students in attendance in a program, under Subsection (e) in the computation of the district's or school's average daily attendance with a 100 percent attendance rate for funding purposes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 39.023, Education Code, by amending Subsection (c-3) and adding Subsection (c-10), as follows:

(c-3) Creates an exception under Subsection (c-10).

(c-10) Authorizes an entity that operates a dropout recovery education program under Section 29.081(e) to administer an assessment instrument under Section 39.023 (Adoption and Administration of Instruments) on any date selected by the entity.

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2023–2024 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.