

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2032
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Education
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas has more than seven million people over age 18 without a high school diploma. More than 17 percent of our population lives in poverty. The majority of those lack sufficient education and job training, while more than 60 percent live below a living wage and more than 26 percent of Texas children have parents who lack stable employment. Women and people of color are disproportionately impacted. The likelihood of a child dropping out of school is 50 percent when their parent has not graduated. A child's educational outcomes are directly impacted by their parents' educational attainment levels. Creating a pathway out of poverty for an adult through education not only benefits the adult earning the high school diploma but also improves educational opportunities and outcomes for their children.

The Texas Public Adult High School pilot was designed with a singular purpose: to educate adults not being served by Texas high schools. In 2013, the Texas Legislature and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) authorized an adult high school pilot program to enhance economic opportunities for 18-to-50-year-olds who dropped out of high school and are typically underemployed or unemployed. The pilot was developed as a strategy to address state workforce needs, offering an opportunity to adult high school dropouts to complete a high school education (not a GED) and improve their ability to support their families.

Since 2013, legislators on both sides of the aisle have acknowledged the successful impact of the pilot and supported the model. In the 87th legislative session, policymakers passed S.B. 1615, which created a new subchapter (Subchapter G, Chapter 12) in the Education Code. This new subchapter was enacted to meet the needs of adult learners and ensure that the program was financially sustainable by codifying public adult high school education. Subchapter G provides for enrollment and performance-based funding through the Foundation School Program, as well as access to the Instructional Materials Allotment, Compensatory Education Allotment, and Special Education Programs, among others. The legislation also established different testing and accountability standards that are more appropriate for adult learners.

The current pilot program has graduated more than 1,500 students, with 90 percent positive outcomes, including average income increases of more than \$4,300 per student upon graduation, increases in post-secondary enrollment, and longitudinal family impacts such as improved educational outcomes for participants' children, lower recidivism rates, and higher employment rates. The success of the pilot warrants replication of the approach.

S.B. 2032 would authorize school districts, higher education institutions, and local governments to contract with a nonprofit to establish an adult public high school to serve students from ages 18 to 50 and who have not earned a high school diploma. These schools would be eligible for Foundation School Program funding for participating students and the schools would be subject to the existing program requirements and accountability metrics that apply to adult public high schools.

As proposed, S.B. 2032 amends current law relating to the authorization of certain adult high school charter school 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 Subchapter G, Chapter 12, Education Code, by adding Section 12.2551, as follows:

Sec. 12.2551. ALTERNATIVE AUTHORIZATION. (a) Requires the commissioner of education, notwithstanding any other law and in addition to the other permissible methods for establishing a charter or campus under Chapter 12 (Charters), on the basis of an application submitted, to grant a charter under the adult high school charter school program to the entities described by Subsection (b) to provide an adult education program for individuals described by Section 12.258 (Student Eligibility; Admission) to successfully complete a high school program that can lead to a diploma and career and technology education courses that can lead to industry certification.

(b) Provides that the following entities are eligible to submit an application under Subsection (a):

(1) the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a home-rule school district that has entered into a contract under Section 11.157 (Contracts for Educational Services) with a nonprofit entity described by Section 12.256 (Charter Holder Qualifications) to operate the program;

(2) a public junior college or public senior college or university, as those terms are defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions), that has entered into a contract with a nonprofit entity described by Section 12.256 to operate the program; and

(3) a governmental entity that has entered into a contract with a nonprofit entity described by Section 12.256 to operate the program.

(c) Provides that the provisions of this chapter, including provisions related to assessment, accountability, and funding, govern a program authorized under this section.

(d) Provides that the provisions of Section 12.255 (Authorization for Charter) do not apply to a charter granted under this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.