

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2158
By: King
Education
5/30/2023
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Men and women reentering the community from prison or jail face challenges to finding steady, stable employment, increasing the likelihood that they may re-offend and return to confinement. Within three years, 40 percent will be reincarcerated. One reason for this is that ex-offenders lack the knowledge, training, and skills to support a successful return to communities. According to a study by the Rand Institute, inmates who participate in any kind of educational program behind bars—from remedial math to vocational auto shop to college-level courses—are up to 43 percent less likely to reoffend and return to prison. They also appear to be far more likely to find a job after their release, and the social stability that comes with it.

It costs Texas taxpayers more than \$28,000 per year to incarcerate an individual. The cost to educate and train individuals during their incarceration or community supervision so that they are better prepared to reenter society is miniscule compared to the costs to communities, victims, and families when they are not able to reintegrate successfully. Every dollar invested in prison-based education yields \$4 to \$5 of taxpayer savings in reduced incarceration costs. Expanding opportunities for incarcerated adults to complete a high school education and earn a diploma will reduce recidivism.

Texas Education Code, Chapter 12, Subchapter G, Section 12.255, authorizes an adult high school charter, the stated purpose of which is to meet industry needs for a sufficiently trained workforce within the state and strengthen the economic and educational prosperity of the state. S.B. 2158 establishes a pilot program within the state-operated facilities in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to offer adults between the ages of 26 and 50 the opportunity to complete their high school education and earn a high school diploma. The pilot authorizes the establishment of at least three sites suitable for the pilot program.

(Original Author's/Sponsors Statement of Intent)

S.B. 2158 amends current law relating the establishment of an adult education pilot program by the Windham School District.

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 Chapter 19, Education Code, by adding Section 19.0052, as follows:

Sec. 19.0052. ADULT EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Windham School District (district) to establish a pilot program under which one or more nonprofit entities provide an adult education program under Subchapter G (Adult High School Charter School Program), Chapter 12, to enable persons described by Subsection (b) to successfully complete a high school program that can lead to a diploma.

(b) Provides that a person confined or imprisoned in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice who is at least 26 years of age and not more than 50 years of age

is eligible to enroll in an adult education program operated under the pilot program if the person:

(1) has failed to complete the curriculum requirements for high school graduation;

(2) has failed to perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument required for high school graduation; or

(3) has failed to earn a high school equivalency certificate.

(c) Requires the district to enter into a memorandum of understanding with at least one nonprofit entity described by Section 12.256 (Charter Holder Qualifications), Education Code, to provide an adult education program under the pilot program. Requires the district to require the nonprofit entity to identify each region of this state in which the entity is able to operate an adult education program under the pilot program.

(d) Requires the district, in consultation with each nonprofit entity with which the district enters into a memorandum of understanding under this section, to identify at least three schools operated by the district that are suitable to serve as sites for the pilot program.

SECTION 2. Requires the district to establish and implement the pilot program required by Section 19.0052, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than September 1, 2024.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.