

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3643
By: King, Ken
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The virtual school network was recently expanded to provide students across Texas with access to courses that may not be offered in their local school district. Since that time, the legislature has not studied best practices for virtual education, causing some concern regarding whether the state is expanding virtual education in the proper manner. The COVID-19 pandemic provided substantial evidence that there is a need for improved virtual education strategies for Texas students. H.B. 3643 seeks to create a commission to evaluate the current state of virtual education and provide the legislature with recommendations on the delivery of and funding for virtual education under the foundation school program.

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

H.B. 3643 amends the Education Code to establish the 13-member Texas Commission on Virtual Education. The bill sets out provisions relating to the appointment of commission members and provides for the commission's administration and operation. The bill requires the commission to develop recommendations to address issues related to the delivery of and funding for virtual education under the foundation school program, including alternative instructional delivery methods and alternative methods of funding. The commission may hold public meetings as needed to fulfill its duties and is subject to state open meetings law and state public information law.

H.B. 3643 requires the commission, not later than December 31, 2022, to prepare and deliver a report to the governor and the legislature that contains its recommendations for legislative action to improve the implementation of virtual education. The bill applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. The commission is abolished and the bill's provisions expire January 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.