

SUBJECT: Establishment of online testing for high school equivalency examinations

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Eissler, Allen, Aycock, Farias, Olivo, Shelton
0 nays
5 absent — Hochberg, Dutton, Jackson, Patrick, Weber

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 8 — 31-0

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Jodie Smith, Texans Care for Children)
Against — None

BACKGROUND: The American Council on Education develops and delivers the high school equivalency exam administered in Texas by the Texas Education Agency. Currently, the exam must be taken at an official testing center.

DIGEST: SB 669 would require the State Board of Education to provide by rule for the administration of the high school equivalency examination online should the national entity that develops and delivers the exam authorize online testing. Rules would have to provide a procedure for verifying the identity of the test taker.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2009, and would apply beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.