

- SUBJECT:** Evaluating the performance of dropout recovery schools
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Aycock, Allen, J. Davis, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Huberty, K. King, Ratliff, J. Rodriguez
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Villarreal
- WITNESSES:** For — Ashlee Clark, Richard Marquez, and Leticia Medrano; Texans Can Academy; Monty Exter, The Association of Texas Professional Educators; Bill Hammond, Texas Association of Business; Parc Smith, American YouthWorks; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ellen Arnold, Texas Association of Goodwills and Texas PTA; Chayanna Bell, Texans Can Academies; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Nan Clayton, League of Women Voters of Texas; David Dunn, Texas Charter Schools Association; Andrew Erben, Texas Institute for Education Reform; Eric Glenn, Texas Charter School Association; David Hung; Janna Lilly, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Ken McCraw, Texas Association of Community Schools; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Don Rogers, Texas Rural Education Association; Julie Shields, Texas association of School Boards; Addie Smith, Texas Charter Management Organizations; Paula Trietsch Chaney; Chandra Villanueva, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Maria Whitsett, Texas School Alliance; Howell Wright, Texas Association of Mid Size Schools; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* David Anderson, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** Under the state accountability system, alternative education campuses have the option to be evaluated under alternative education accountability (AEA) procedures and receive accountability ratings based on different performance standards and indicators/measures than those used for regular campuses.

DIGEST:

CSHB 3808 would create a category of dropout-recovery schools and a method of evaluating those schools' performance.

The bill would designate certain school districts, campuses, and open-enrollment charter schools as dropout-recovery schools if more than half of their students were 17 and older, and the school was required to register under the AEA.

The education commissioner would adopt an alternative completion rate that compares the ratio of students who graduate, continue attending school into the next academic year, or receive a high school equivalency certificate to the total number of students in the same longitudinal cohort.

Students who had been expelled would be counted as graduates if they graduated or received a high school equivalency certificate.

A student's best score on state-mandated tests would be counted, whether it came from the primary administration or a retake in a school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013.

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

CSHB 3808 would allow the state education accountability system to more accurately measure dropout-recovery high schools by giving them credit for serving high-risk dropouts. While it is true that many traditional high schools also serve students who are at risk of dropping out, it would be fair to have a separate accountability provisions for schools that focus on dropout recovery and at which more than half are older than 17.

Texas cannot afford to ignore the thousands of students who drop out each year. On average, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed and earn less money when they eventually secure work. Two-thirds of inmates in the Texas prison system are high school dropouts.

Many of the students served by dropout-recovery schools are simply removed from the accountability system altogether. As a result, their ultimate accomplishment of staying in school and graduating is never counted as a success for that school. This flaw in the system puts the schools in danger of being labeled as unacceptable and potentially being

shut down merely because they serve the at-risk population they are intended to serve. Closing schools that serve dropouts literally shifts at-risk students from one to the next. Instead, the state should provide a stable, safe haven to help students graduate and be successful in life.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

There is no doubt that dropout-recovery schools face a challenge in serving older students who may have been expelled. But if they are not up to the task, the state needs to shut them down and find another charter operator who could do a better job.

Many schools and charters that serve a smaller population of older dropouts face the same challenges but would not qualify for consideration under the bill's modified accountability provisions. These schools also deserve relief in the way they count graduates and student test scores.