

SUBJECT: Establishing school year start dates for certain schools and districts

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allison, K. Bell, M. González, Meyer, Sanford
5 nays — Allen, Ashby, K. King, Talarico, VanDeaver
1 present not voting — Dutton

WITNESSES: For — Dan Neal, Camping Association of Mutual Progress; Brad Wuest, Natural Bridge Caverns; John McCord, NFIB; Johnny Blevins, Splash Kingdom Family Waterpark; Scott Joslove, Texas Hotel and Lodging Association; Dan Decker, Texas Travel Industry Association; David Teel, Texas Travel Industry Association; Danny Dawdy, Texas Baptist Camping Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tris Castaneda, Anheuser-Busch; Roger Moore, Camp Longhorn; Tweety Eastland and Richard Eastland, Camp Mystic; Kathryn Garza and Severiano Garza, Camp Waldemar; Ryan Brannan, Galveston Park Board of Trustees; Jim Grace, Houston First; Dylan Cromley, League of Women Voters of Texas; Mary Maddux and Fran Rhodes, NE Tarrant Tea Party; Winter Prosapio, Schlitterbahn; Marci Blevins, Splash Kingdom Waterpark; Randall Dally and Ron Hinkle, Texas Association of Campground Owners; Carlton Schwab, Texas Economic Development Council; Kenneth Besserman, Texas Restaurant Association; Jim Sheer, Texas Retailers Association; Ron Hinkle, Texas Travel Industry Association; Ashley Harris, Visit San Antonio; William Henry, Vista Camps; and six individuals)

Against — Christina Courson, Lockhart Independent School District; Scott Muri, Spring Branch ISD, Texas Association of School Administrators; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Colby Nichols, Austin ISD; Louann Martinez, Fort Worth ISD; Bob Popinski, Raise Your Hand Texas; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Dax Gonzalez, Texas Association of School Boards; Jerod Patterson, Texas Rural Education Association; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Marty

De Leon, Texas Urban Council; Cindy Rodriguez)

On — Andrew Kim, Comal ISD; Columba Wilson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: AJ Crabill, Texas Education Agency; Lisa Dawn-Fisher, Texas State Teachers Association)

BACKGROUND: Education Code sec. 25.0811 prohibits school districts from beginning instruction for students prior to the fourth Monday in August.

Education Code sec. 12A.003 authorizes a district of innovation to modify the school day or year.

DIGEST: CSHB 233 would require an open-enrollment charter school or a public school district designated as a district of innovation to begin instruction for students for a school year on or after the third Monday in August. A local innovation plan would be prohibited from exempting a district of innovation from the requirement.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2020-2021 school year.

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, 2019.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 233 would provide consistency for families by mandating that charter schools and districts of innovation start no earlier than the third Monday in August.

Many small and tourism-related businesses rely heavily on summer travel profits for year-round sustainability. These businesses would benefit from a school schedule that consistently begins in late August, and the tax revenue they generate would benefit the state.

These businesses often employ high school-aged students, providing the students with educational value by allowing them to gain and apply workforce skills that could translate into their academic learning, but the

businesses can have difficulty making employment decisions due to the unpredictability of annual school calendars.

The bill would not affect the quality of instruction because Texas requires a certain number of instructional minutes for students per year, rather than days. Districts of innovation still would have some flexibility in starting the school year to support student success.

The bill would be especially crucial to military families and military-connected students who can experience frequent moves and transitions that can be exacerbated by inconsistent school start dates.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 233 could be detrimental to student learning and well-being and would infringe on local control.

By postponing student learning late into the summer, the bill could add to the "summer slide," a term used to refer to the decline in academic skills and learning that students could suffer during the summer months when school is not in session. Districts of innovation have addressed the summer slide by building in additional time at the beginning of the school calendar to provide academic support in the form of remediation, acceleration, and enrichments. The bill could restrict districts' ability to offer that support.

Students that qualify for free or reduced lunch also rely on schools for consistent meals, social emotional support, and academic engagement, which are essential to student learning. School districts also use the additional days to provide teacher and staff development consistently throughout the year as opposed to frontloading it in the beginning of the school year.

By requiring a certain school start date, the bill could infringe on a district's local control to create a calendar that appropriately served the unique needs and population of that district.