

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 3706
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Education
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, Texas recognizes the unique needs of a diverse student population by allowing public schools to administer a variety of dropout recovery programs in an attempt to better serve at-risk students. Unfortunately, current law does not allow dropout recovery programs to use online courses, which some stakeholders contend could be better suited to the unique learning needs of this population. Online learning is an untapped resource for reaching and assisting these students, and Texas cannot afford to ignore the opportunity it provides to improve graduation rates and support student achievement.

H.B. 3706 allows school districts to offer dropout recovery programs online in addition to the campus-based programs they already provide. The bill lays out a variety of requirements to ensure quality and accountability, including the use of an individual learning plan, an academic coach for each student, and monthly reporting to the student's school district regarding the student's progress. H.B. 3706 provides campuses and districts with the flexibility they need to foster success and increase graduation among this important population of students.

H.B. 3706 amends current law relating to certain alternative education programs designed to address workforce development needs for at-risk students.

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 Section 29.081, Education Code, by amending Subsection (e) and adding Subsections (e-1) and (e-2), as follows:

(e) Authorizes the community-based dropout recovery education program (program) to be offered at a campus or through the use of an Internet online program that leads to a high school diploma and prepares the student to enter the workforce.

(e-1) Requires that a campus-based program, rather than the programs, meet certain criteria.

(e-2) Requires that an Internet online program:

(1) include as a part of its curriculum credentials, certifications, or other course offerings that relate directly to employment opportunities in this state;

(2) employ as faculty and administrators persons with baccalaureate or advanced degrees;

(3) provide an academic coach and local advocate for each student;

(4) use an individual learning plan to monitor each student's progress;

- (5) establish satisfactory requirements for the monthly progress of students according to standards set by the commissioner of education (commissioner);
- (6) provide a monthly report to the student's school district regarding the student's progress;
- (7) perform satisfactorily according to performance indicators and accountability standards adopted for alternative education programs by the commissioner; and
- (8) comply with this title (Public Education) and rules adopted under this title except as otherwise provided by this subsection.

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 29.0822(b) and (c), Education Code, as follows:

- (a) Includes allowing a student to enroll in a program in which courses are conducted online in the list of authorized actions by a school district to provide a program that meets the needs of certain students.
- (c) Creates an exception in the case of a student enrolled in a course described by Subsection (b)(4) (relating to authorizing school districts to allow students to enroll in an online program).

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.