

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R1605 MEW-D

S.B. 2244
By: Paxton
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Interested parties note that enrolled students may be prohibited from enrolling in online courses if the student does not meet various requirements and if the school offers a similar course in the traditional class-room setting. S.B. 2244 addresses these concerns by making virtual classes more accessible to students, creating a study to enhance online learning, and eliminating current restrictions to using digital learning.

As proposed, S.B. 2244 amends current law relating to the state virtual school network and a study on digital learning.

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 26.0031(c), Education Code, to delete existing text authorizing a school district or open-enrollment charter school to deny a request to enroll a student in an electronic course if the district or school offers a substantially similar course and to make nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 30A.153(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Entitles a school district or open-enrollment charter school in which a student is enrolled, rather than a school district or open-enrollment charter subject to the limitation imposed under Subsection (a-1) (relating to a limit on the number of electronic courses in which a student may enroll) to funding under Chapter 42 (Foundation School Program) or in accordance with the terms of a charter granted under Section 12.101 (Authorization) for the student's enrollment in an electronic course offered through the state virtual school network in the same manner that the district or school is entitled to funding for the student's enrollment in courses provided in a traditional classroom setting, provided that the student successfully completes the electronic course.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 30A.155(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Deletes existing text authorizing a school district or open-enrollment charter school to charge a fee for enrollment in an electronic course provided through the state virtual school network to a student who resides in this state and elects to enroll in an electronic course provided through the network for which the school district or open-enrollment charter school in which the student is enrolled as a full time student declines to pay the costs, as authorized by Section 26.0031 (c-1) (relating to authorizing a school district or open-enrollment charter school to deny a request to enroll in student in an electronic course if a student attempts to enroll in a course load that is inconsistent with the student's high school graduation plan or requirements for college admission or earning an industry certification).

SECTION 4. Repealer: Section 26.0031(c-1) (relating to authorizing a school district or open-enrollment charter school to decline to pay the cost of a student for more than three yearlong electronic courses, or the equivalent, during a school year), Education Code.

Repealer: Section 30A.153 (a-1) (relating to a limitation of certain foundation school program funding for a school district or open-enrollment charter school to funding for a student's enrollment in not more than three electronic courses during any school year), Education Code.

SECTION 5. (a) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to conduct a study regarding the effectiveness of digital learning in public schools. Requires the study to include:

(1) methods of providing digital learning to students in kindergarten through 12th grade; and

(2) recommendations regarding the establishment of partnerships between school districts or open-enrollment charter schools and institutions of higher education and other public and private entities to provide digital learning options.

(b) Requires TEA, not later than September 1, 2020, to submit to the commissioner of education and each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over public education a report that includes:

(1) the results of the study conducted under this section; and

(2) recommendations to improve digital learning, including virtual learning under Chapter 30A (State Virtual School Network), Education Code.

(c) Requires the commissioner of education to establish procedures to increase, based on the results of the study and the report prepared under this section:

(1) digital learning by students and participation in the virtual school network; and

(2) participation by school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in establishing partnerships with institutions of higher education and other public and private entities.

(d) Provides that this section expires January 1, 2021.

SECTION 6. Provides that this Act applies beginning with 2019-2020 school year

SECTION 7. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.