

- SUBJECT:** Creating a charter school pilot program for adults 19 to 50 years of age
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Aycock, Allen, J. Davis, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Huberty, K. King, Ratliff, J. Rodriguez, Villarreal
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Traci Berry, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas; Scott Bess, Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Matthew Abbott, Wayside Schools; Michelle Bonton, Natalie Leffall and Angeil Washington, The Rhodes School; David Dunn and Eric Glenn, Texas Charter Schools Association; Andrew Erben, Texas Institute for Education Reform; Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Gavino Fernandez, Jr.; LULAC 4861; Scott Norman, Texas Association of Builders; Nelson Salinas, Texas Association of Business;
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* David Anderson, Lisa Dawn-Fisher, and Gina Day, Texas Education Agency)
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1831 would create an adult high school diploma and industry certification charter school pilot program for adults 19 to 50 years of age. The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation.
- The State Board of Education could grant the charter to one nonprofit entity with a successful history of providing education and job placement services to adults age 18 and older whose educational opportunities had been limited by educational disadvantages, disabilities, homelessness, criminal history, or similar circumstances.
- The nonprofit would be required to commit at least \$1 million to the program and could partner with a public junior college to provide career and technology courses that lead to industry certification.
- The program would be open to students who met age guidelines and had

failed to complete high school course requirements or failed an exam required for graduation.

The bill would require the education commissioner to adopt and administer a standardized secondary exit-level assessment for program participants who successfully completed high school curriculum requirements.

Funding for participants between the ages of 19 and 25 would come through the Foundation School Program. Funding for participants who were 26 or older would be determined by legislative appropriation.

Beginning December 1, 2016, and following on the same date immediately preceding each regular legislative session, the Texas Education Agency would deliver reports to the governor and the Legislature evaluating the pilot program and making recommendations for its abolition, continuation, or expansion.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 1831 would establish the adult education pilot program for about 150 adults between the ages of 19 and 50. The program would allow adults to graduate with a high school diploma and postsecondary certification, enhancing their economic opportunities and helping meet the needs of Texas industry for a sufficiently trained workforce.

The lifetime earnings difference between those with and without a diploma is around \$400,000. Those who earn a certification earn an additional \$240,000 in their lifetime. Currently, a GED is the only option for adults age 26 and older. The pilot program would offer flexibility in a delivery model more appropriate for adults, including experiential course credit, online and direct instruction, and dual credit courses.

The bill would require a nonprofit applying to operate the charter program to commit at least \$1 million, which would reduce the state's costs.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

While adult education is a laudable goal, the cost for this program is estimated at \$1.6 million for fiscal 2014-15. Before setting up a costly new charter school pilot project, the state should explore other options for training adults.

NOTES: According to the Legislative Budget Board, the adult high school diploma charter program created by CSHB 1831 would have a negative impact to general revenue related funds of \$1.6 million in fiscal 2014-15.