

SUBJECT: Creating alternative accountability plans for specialized support campuses

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Ashby, K. Bell, M. González, K. King,  
Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

2 absent — Allison, Dutton

WITNESSES: For — Chad Ouellette and Debra Ready, Austin ISD; Christine Broughal, Texans for Special Education Reform; Maureen Benschoter; Mara LaViola; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jacquie Benestante, Autism Society of Texas; Steven Aleman, Disability Rights Texas; Brenda Koegler, League of Women Voters of Texas; Seth Rau, San Antonio ISD; Kristin McGuire, TCASE; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Grover Campbell, Texas Association of School Boards; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Linda Litzinger, Texas Parent to Parent; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Jen Ramos, Texas Young Democrats; Amanda Brownson, Texas Association of School Business Officials; Knox Kimberly, Upbring; and 12 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Bill Kelberlau; Julie Ross)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jamie Crowe and Eric Marin, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that certain school campuses that enroll only students who receive special education services and who have intensive cognitive and medical needs should qualify for an alternative accountability plan.

DIGEST: CSHB 2797 would create a system for evaluating specialized support

campuses, which would be defined as a school district campus that:

- had a campus identification number;
- served students enrolled in any grade level at which state standardized exams were administered; and
- had a student enrollment in which at least 90 percent of students received special education services and a significant percentage were required to take a STAAR alternative exam and were unable to provide an authentic academic response on the exam.

The commissioner of education, in consultation with administrators and teachers at specialized support campuses, parents and guardians of students, and other stakeholders, would have to establish by rule appropriate accountability guidelines for use by a specialized support campus in developing an alternative accountability plan based on the specific student population served by the campus.

Based on those guidelines, a specialized support campus could develop and submit to the commissioner for approval an alternative accountability plan tailored to its student population. The commissioner could approve the plan only if it followed the guidelines and complied with applicable federal law.

By December 1, 2022, the commissioner would have to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, House speaker, and certain legislative committees a report on the effectiveness of the bill in evaluating specialized support campuses and any recommendations for legislative or other action.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2019-2020 school year and the bill's provisions would expire September 1, 2023.

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.