

- SUBJECT:** Excluding students who suffer serious injuries from school dropout rates
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Allison, Ashby, K. Bell, M. González, K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Dutton
- WITNESSES:** For — Rex Burks, Simms ISD; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Betsy Singleton, League of Women Voters of Texas; Deborah Caldwell, North East ISD; Ted Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Dominic Giarratani, Texas Association of School Boards; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Kristin McGuire, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Jerod Patterson, Texas Rural Education Association; Buck Gilcrease, Texas School Alliance; Lisa Dawn-Fisher, Texas State Teachers Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jamie Crowe and Linda Roska, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code sec. 39.053(g-1) requires the commissioner of education to exclude from the computation of a school's dropout and completion rates students who:
- are ordered by a court to attend a high school equivalency certificate program;
 - were previously reported to the state as dropouts;

- are in attendance but not in membership for average daily attendance purposes;
- are unschooled asylees or refugees in certain grades;
- are detained in county juvenile detention facilities under certain conditions; and
- are incarcerated in state or federal facilities as adults.

DIGEST: HB 330 would add to the list of students excluded when calculating a public school's dropout and completion rates students who could not go to school because they suffered a condition, injury, or illness that required substantial medical care. The exemption would apply beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

This 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: HB 330 would remove the unfair "dropout" label assigned to students forced to leave school because of severe injuries or illnesses. Students should not be classified as dropouts because of unfortunate circumstances outside of their control.

The bill also would ensure that a school district's accountability rating was not affected when a student left school because of a serious injury or illness that was outside of the district's control. The exemption is especially necessary in small and mid-sized school districts where a few dropouts could have a large impact on accountability ratings and result in decreased funding.

OPPONENTS SAY: HB 330 could allow school districts to misrepresent their dropout and completion rates. The bill would add an additional loophole to a system of computing dropout and completion rates that already contains several loopholes.