

- SUBJECT:** Permissible locations of charter schools created by certain universities
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Aycock, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Galindo, Huberty, K. King
- 1 nay — VanDeaver
- 2 absent — Farney, González
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 30 — 30-1 (Nichols)
- WITNESSES:** (*On House companion bill, HB 2017*)  
For — Lonnie Hutson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Nelson Salinas, Texas Association of Business; David Fincher)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Monty Exter, The Association of Texas Professional Educators)
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 12.152 authorizes certain colleges and universities to apply for an open-enrollment charter school to operate on their campuses or in the same county in which their campuses are located.
- DIGEST:** SB 955 would allow a public senior college or university to apply for an open-enrollment charter school to operate in any county in Texas.
- In evaluating an application for a charter outside the campus or county where the college or university was located, the commissioner of education would be required to consider:
- the locations of existing open-enrollment charter schools, as appropriate, to avoid duplication of services in the area in which the applicant proposed to operate the school; and
  - the need of the community in that area to have an additional charter school.

The bill would apply to an application for a new charter pending on or submitted on or after the effective date of the bill. A college or university holding a charter granted before the effective date would need to obtain the commissioner of education's approval to operate a charter school in another county.

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, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 955 would expand the authorization for a college or university to operate an open-enrollment charter school outside the county where the college or university was located. Some universities with a large number of education majors would like the opportunity to operate charter schools in different locations to provide student teachers with meaningful field experiences in diverse educational settings. The bill also could allow a university located in a less populated county to help meet demand for charter schools in more populous counties.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

SB 955 would allow a university to operate a charter school far from the university's home campus. This could create a situation in which the university lacked sufficient faculty support and other resources needed to effectively operate the remotely located charter school. It would be better to limit universities to operating charters in counties that were contiguous to the higher education campuses or to partner with a school district in the desired location.

**NOTES:**

The House companion bill, HB 2017 by R. Miller, was considered in a public hearing of the House Committee on Public Education on April 28 and was left pending.