

SUBJECT: Requiring Windham School District to provide certain programs

COMMITTEE: Corrections — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Murr, Allen, Rodriguez, Sherman, Slaton, White

0 nays

3 absent — Bailes, Burrows, Martinez Fischer

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Mark Wiggins, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Jennifer Toon, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Maggie Luna, Statewide Leadership Council; Alycia Castillo, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Suzi Kennon, Texas PTA; Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Molly Weiner, United Ways of Texas; Susana Carranza; Idona Griffith; Vanessa MacDougal; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

On — Kristina Hartman, Windham School District; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Robert O'Banion, Windham School District)

BACKGROUND: Windham School District provides educational, career, technical and life-skills training programs to those incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Concerns have been raised that the approximately 300 minors and those under 22 years old who are eligible to receive special education and are incarcerated in TDCJ do not have appropriate access to educational programs, including a high school diploma program. Some have suggested that Windham School District should be given the flexibility to provide such educational programs.

DIGEST: CSHB 30 would require the Windham School District to develop and

provide an educational program for certain individuals younger than 18 years old who are incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The educational programs would have to include the curriculum requirements for a high school diploma or instruction that prepared the person for the high school equivalency examination.

The programs would have to be provided to individuals incarcerated in TDCJ who were not high school graduates and were:

- younger than 18 years old; or
- younger than 22 years old and eligible to receive special education services.

When developing an individual's educational program, the Windham School District would have to consider:

- the duration of the person's incarceration;
- the person's current level of education and educational goals and preference; and
- if applicable, recommendations of the individual's admission, review, and dismissal committee.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

NOTES: The bill would have a negative impact of \$1.3 million through the fiscal 2022-23 biennium, according to the Legislative Budget Board.