

**SUBJECT:** Creating procedures and programs for certain homeless and foster youth

**COMMITTEE:** Human Services — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Raymond, Frank, Keough, Miller, Minjarez, Rose, Swanson, Wu

0 nays

1 absent — Klick

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 4 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

**WITNESSES:** *On House companion bill, HB 1640:*  
For — Sarah Crockett, Texas CASA; Tymothy Belseth; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jason Arnold, Burmont, Inc.; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Katherine Barillas, One Voice Texas; Kate Murphy, Texans Care for Children; Ted Melina Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Ellen Arnold, Texas PTA; Lee Nichols, TexProtects; James Thurston, United Ways of Texas)

Against — None

On — Courtney Arbour, Texas Workforce Commission; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Elizabeth "Liz" Kromrei, Department of Family and Protective Services)

**BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 25.007(b) requires the Texas Education Agency to assist students who are homeless or in substitute care transition from one school to another by establishing certain procedures for student records, course credit, special education referrals, and coordination between the agency and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) for the education of students under conservatorship.

Sec. 54.366 exempts certain children who have been under the

conservatorship of DFPS from paying tuition and fees for higher education, including dual-credit courses or other courses where high school students earn joint high school and college credit.

Family Code, ch. 264 outlines the requirements for child welfare services in suits affecting the parent-child relationship.

**DIGEST:**

SB 1220 would require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to assist students who were homeless or in substitute care transition from one school to another by developing procedures to ensure that a new school relied on the previous school's course placement decisions in order to place students in comparable courses or educational programs at the new school, if those courses or programs were available. It also would require school districts, campuses, and open-enrollment charter schools to provide comparable services to a student during the special education referral process or until the new school developed an individualized education program for the student.

The Commissioner of Education could establish rules to implement these provisions and to facilitate a student's transition between schools. These provisions would apply beginning with the 2017-18 school year.

**Career development and education program.** The bill would require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to collaborate with local workforce development boards, foster care transition centers, community and technical colleges, schools, and any other appropriate workforce industry resources to create a program for current and former foster youth that would:

- assist youth with obtaining a high school diploma or GED and industry certifications necessary for high-demand occupations;
- provide career guidance; and
- inform youth about the state's higher education tuition and fee waiver program.

By September 1, 2018, DFPS, in collaboration with TEA, would produce

a report on the program containing recommendations for its further development. The department would submit the report to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the House, and the applicable standing House and Senate Committees. The reporting requirements would expire September 1, 2019.

**Reenactment and effective date.** SB 1220 would reenact Education Code, sec. 25.007(b) to harmonize language in different versions of the subsection that were amended through the enactment of three bills by the 84th Legislature in 2015.

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, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 1220 would minimize interruptions in the academic progress of a homeless or substitute care student by requiring a new school to rely on a previous school's course placement decisions. This would prevent students from starting the same courses over every time they switched schools. A student would be placed in a comparable course only if those courses were available at the new school.

The career and development program would provide tangible skills to current and former foster youth. Equipping foster youth with necessary life skills would reduce a child's risk of homelessness and effectively prepare him or her to live independently in the community.

According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, no significant fiscal implication to the state or units of local government is anticipated. It is assumed the duties and responsibilities associated with implementing the bill's provisions could be accomplished using existing resources.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

SB 1220 would remove a new school's flexibility on the course placement of a student who was homeless or in substitute care. Instead of requiring the new school to rely on a previous school's course placement decisions for a student, the bill should allow the new school to make its own course

placement decisions.

NOTES: The companion bill, HB 1640 by Vo, was approved by the House on May 9.