

SB 569 / HB 2196

VIRTUAL & HYBRID EDUCATION

As the Chairman of the Texas Commission on Virtual Education, I and the undersigned organizations ask for your support for SB 569 / HB 2196, aligned with the bipartisan, unanimous recommendations of the Commission.

- Sen. Bettencourt (R), Sen. West (D), Rep. Shaheen (R), Rep. Morales (D), Rep. King (R), and former Sen. Larry Taylor (R), served alongside me on the Commission and were integral in helping design a virtual and hybrid education policy framework for the future of Texas.
- SB 569 by Senator Bettencourt is joint-authored by Senators West (D), Flores (R), Middleton (R), Parker (R), Paxton (R), and Zaffirini (D). Likewise, companion legislation in the House, HB 2196 by Rep. Keith Bell, will feature bipartisan joint authorship.

The bill:

1. **Gives districts and charter schools the ability to offer new, innovative public school options for families.** Allows districts and charter schools to offer high-quality virtual and hybrid education options, enabling families to partner with districts and charter schools to choose the best modality for their child.
2. **Enables flexible learning models that promote work-based learning and apprenticeships.** The bill helps early college, CTE, P-TECH, and R-PEP models realize their full potential with increased flexibility to take advantage of robust on-the-job learning opportunities.
3. **Ensures access to advanced courses.** In the face of existing course access and hiring challenges, especially in rural communities, ensures that students have access to advanced math, science, foreign language, and other specialized courses.
4. **Includes strong quality controls and strong accountability.** While ensuring access to these high-quality options for all students, includes important protections for students with special education needs and strong accountability for student outcomes.
5. **Includes important teacher protections.** Prohibits pandemic-style simultaneous/concurrent instruction and ensures teaching virtually is fully optional for teachers.
6. **Allows current district programs serving families to continue operating.** Includes grandfather language allowing current district and charter virtual and hybrid programs currently serving students to continue operating.

While the majority of students will continue to go to school and take classes in a traditional school building, high-quality virtual and hybrid education options are an essential lifeline for those who need it. On behalf of Texas students and families, I humbly ask for your support for SB 569 / HB 2196 to ensure our current education system is built for the dynamic future of learning and work and to position Texas as the national leader in virtual and hybrid education.

Sincerely,

Rex Gore

Chairman, Texas Commission on Virtual Education

