



HB 1281: relating to the inclusion in the foundation curriculum for public schools of instruction in certain skills development to prepare students for adult responsibility.

Public Education Committee

April 28, 2009

Good afternoon, Committee members:

My name is Christine Gendron and I am the Public Policy Coordinator for the Texas Network of Youth Services, a nonprofit association of organizations that serve at-risk youth. I am here today to support HB 1281, by Rep. McClendon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and thank you Rep. McClendon, for authoring this bill, which would make an important investment in our state's youth.

HB 1281 would create an advisory panel that would develop a curriculum to teach students skills in social, emotional, and behavioral interaction and prepare them for adult responsibility. The curriculum would be integrated into the foundation curriculum and include instruction on methods for effective, nonviolent communication; problem solving; setting appropriate boundaries and priorities; and creative decision making.

We support the development and implementation of such a curriculum for several reasons. First, the proposed adult responsibility curriculum is consistent with the principles of Positive Youth Development, a conceptual framework which is increasingly adopted within communities, governmental agencies, as well as in schools. The premise of positive youth development is that in addition to capable families, kids need multi-faceted programs and positive influences within their community, to grow into mature and successful adults. School is one of the most significant influences on young people, because it is where they spend most of their time. As more research is done on child development and how the brain works, it is becoming increasingly clear that education must be about more than just intellectual development; it must be about social, emotional, and behavioral development as well.

We believe that the building of skills such as effective, nonviolent communication; problem solving; setting appropriate boundaries and priorities; and creative decision making are the key to equipping young people with the resiliency necessary to make it through life's challenges and avoid mistakes; while also potentially reducing some of the behavior issues that create havoc in schools today. This type of curriculum is a great way to build a strong workforce and protect the future health and productivity of our state.

Thank you for your time.

Christine Gendron
Public Policy Coordinator
Texas Network of Youth Services
(512) 328-6860
cgendron@tnoys.org