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WHERE WE'LL ALL BE FRIDAY NIGHT!

THE BATTALION STATE

Senate bill would allow charter schools

► *State senators voted to expand public funding of campuses run by private entities.*

AUSTIN (AP) — An 18-year-old who dropped out of public school after having a baby became Texas' first graduate of an independent charter school six months ago, soon after the experimental education program began.

With such students in mind, state senators on Tuesday voted to expand the charter program, which gives public funds to campuses that are independent of school districts, may be run by private entities and are free of many state regulations.

Under the bill by Senate Education Committee Chair Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, the total number of charter schools allowed in Texas would increase from 20 to 80.

The move, made after applications for charter schools have poured into the Texas Education Agency, came despite concerns from another lawmaker that expansion is occurring too fast.

"They've been in existence seven months. Can we take a seven-month experiment and say, 'It's wonderful,?' " asked Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin. "I think we are proceeding too quickly."

Bivins said his measure is not a declaration that the existing schools are successful. But he said it does reflect widespread interest in the program.

The State Board of Education would continue to have authority over who gets the charters under his bill. The state has received more than 280 requests for charter applications, even though all 20 charters authorized already have been granted.

"Clearly the jury is still out," Bivins said. "What we're doing is acknowledging there is enormous in-

terest in pursuing these schools."

Bivins said he was particularly pleased that a large number of the schools are organized to serve disadvantaged students, "those students who have gotten the short-stick in life and arrive at our public schools hungry and not prepared to learn."

"There are far too many of those children who are not making it in the system," Bivins said. "I think we owe it to those kids to try something new."

Barrientos said he found it curious that "all of a sudden people are concerned about disadvantaged students," noting that in other areas, there have been moves against affirmative-action programs.

Sen. Gregory Luna, D-San Antonio, said he had opposed charter schools in the past. But he said he is co-sponsoring Bivins' bill because of the program's potential for at-risk students.

"I think it's one of the best educational measures for those chil-

dren who have not been able to succeed with the current system," Luna said.

The first charter school alumna, Meleka Blacklock of Dallas, got her high school diploma from the Dallas Can! Academy after working eight hours a day to finish the course she needed, said TEA spokesperson Debbie Graves Ratcliffe.

Seventeen of the 20 charter schools authorized have opened their doors, with about \$10 million expected to be spent on the schools this year in state funding, Mrs. Ratcliffe said. Of 2,495 students enrolled, about three of every four are minority and 72 percent would be considered at-risk of dropping out of the regular school program, she said.

The charter school expansion bill now goes to the House for consideration. Senate passage of the measure comes as Bivins works another bill to allow private money to be spent on private tuition for students from low-performing public schools.

► What's Up?

Wednesday

Men's Lacrosse Club: Practice will be held from 4-6 p.m. at the Zachry Fields. Everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary. For details, call Todd Hendreks at 764-8561.

Women's Lacrosse: There will be practice from 4-6 p.m. at the Zachry Fields. Beginners are welcome. For more information call Monica at 694-6915.

Wesley Foundation: There will be an informal worship service at 7 p.m. at 201 Tauber Street (behind Aggeland Credit Union). For more information call, 846-4701.

Catholic Students' Association: There will be a challenge group at 11:30 a.m. For details, call the St. Mary's office.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes: There will be a time of praise and worship, small group bible studies and guest speakers at 9 p.m. in the Cain Hall Film Room. For details call Bryan Waller at 693-1226.

Life Savers' Bible Study: There will be a worship service from 6-7:30 p.m. at All Faith's Chapel. For more information, call 260-9803.

Student Counseling Service-Minority Student Walk-In: There will be walk-in counseling services for students of color. No appointment needed. Students seen on first come, first served basis. For more information, call Dr. Juan Riker at 845-4427, ext. 134.

Texas A&M Fencing Club: Beginners come join the fencing club at 7 p.m. in 267 Read. Call Bobby Thornton at 691-2296 for details.

Roadrunners: There will be a 3-4 mile run for runners of all levels. Meet at 5:30 p.m. in front of G. Rollie White. For more information, call Dao at 260-2441.

Life Savers' Bible Study: A study of the necessity of the Holy Ghost, reading of the book of Hosea and a time of praise and worship will be held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the All Faiths Chapel. Contact Ericka at 823-3653 for more information.

Catholic Students Association: A treasure hunt for the faith will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center Library.

Catholic Students Association: Newman mass will be held at 7:15 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.

ASME Student Chapter: There will be a speaker meeting with Steve Whitlock of Sulzer Orthopedics at 12:30 p.m. in 301 A, B and C of Engineering Physics. For more information, call Victor at 845-6221.

Learning Skills Center: A workshop on test preparation and test anxiety will be held from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Learning Skills Center at the Student Counseling Service in Henderson Hall.

Career Center: There will be a "How to prepare an internship specific resume" seminar at 4 p.m. in 410 Rudder.

The Learning Skills Center of the Student Counseling Services: There will be a workshop on Test Preparation and Test Anxiety from 3-4 p.m. in 103 Henderson Hall. For more information, contact the Student Counseling Service office at 845-4427.

MSC Great Issues: A panel discussion on "The Impact of Modern Science on Religion" will be held at 8:30 p.m. in 601 Rudder. Dr. John Allston of the Department of Sociology will moderate representatives from faiths including Atheist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant. Audience questions after presentation. For information, call Natalie Berger at 847-8377.

Mexican Student Association: Junta general at 6 p.m. in 402 Rudder. Presentacion planillas resados fiesta. Call Agustin at 779-2516 or Pablo at 267-6740, for more information.

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Aggies: The National of Silence Rally and Silent March will be held at Sullivan Ross Statue at 12 p.m. For more information, call Gay Line at 847-0321.

Golden Key NHS: A general meeting will be held 7 p.m. in 502 Rudder. Free food. Contact Kar Casey at 696-2259, for more information.

TAMU Zoological Society: Registration Information Night will be held at 7 p.m. in 100 Butler. Contact Casey at 696-2259, for more information.

FACES: A general meeting to discuss communications and relations will be held at 7 p.m. in 401 Rudder. Contact the FACES office for more information at 845-9804.

Radio and Television News Directors Association (RTNDA): John Franklin of Frame by Frame Productions will speak at 6 p.m. in 301 Reed McDonald. The meeting is open to all majors and new members are welcome. Contact Missa at 694-4145 for more information.

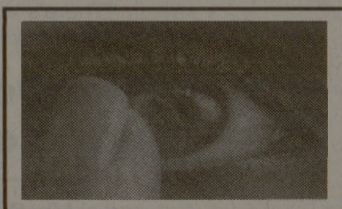
What's Up is a Battalion service lists non-profit student and faculty events and activities. Items should be submitted no later than the days in advance of the desired date. Application deadlines and policies are not events and will not run in What's Up. If you have questions, please call the newsroom at 845-3313.

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Graduating in August or December
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Force Dates

Summer I	Summer II
Wednesday, April 30	Wednesday, April 30
Thursday, May 1	Thursday, May 1
Friday, May 30	Monday, July 7

Fall

Wednesday, April 30
Thursday, May 1
Monday, August 25

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9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
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1. Make sure you have the correct prerequisite (English 104 or equivalent).
2. Come to Blocker 224 during the force dates and times listed above.
3. Bring a letter from your academic advisor stating that you are graduating in the semester for which you are registering.

No forces will be done during pre-registration. You must come in during these dates to get a seat.

If you can't make these dates, send a representative with your letter and a list of preferred times.

Forcing Information line: 862-7724

Web site:
<http://engserve.tamu.edu/files/writingprograms/rulesforforcing.html>

Questions, Concerns, Comments?

Talk with your Vice President for Student Affairs.



If you have any thoughts or concerns regarding student life here at A&M, I'm very interested in hearing them. I am Malon Southerland, your Vice President for Student Affairs and my office is on the 10th floor of Rudder Tower. My door is always open and I encourage you to come by if I can ever be of assistance. Feel free to call me anytime at 845-4728 or contact me through e-mail: malon-southerland@tamu.edu

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THURSDAY, APRIL 10 3:15 - 4:00 PM

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS
161 Bizzell Hall West
845-0544

Warning:
this book may contain graphic content.

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