

SUBJECT: Eliminating sequencing of required English and math high school courses

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Gooden,
K. King, Koop, Meyer, VanDeaver

0 nays

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 3 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: For — Pauline Dow, North East Independent School District; Tyra Walker and Mary Williams, Texas School Alliance, TASA, Alief ISD; *(Registered, but did not testify: Deborah Caldwell, North East Independent School District; Priscilla Camacho, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; Seth Rau, San Antonio ISD; Richard Webster, Spring Branch ISD; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Michael Garcia, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Grover Campbell, Texas Association of School Boards; Michael White, Texas Construction Association; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Mike Meroney, Texas Workforce Coalition, BASF Corporation, Huntsman Corporation)*

Against — None

On — Mark Wiggins, Association of Texas Professional Educators; *(Registered, but did not testify: Kara Belew and Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)*

BACKGROUND: The 83rd Legislature in 2013 enacted HB 5 by Aycock, which required the State Board of Education (SBOE) to set curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program established by the bill, including four credits in English, three credits in math, and three credits in science.

Education Code, sec. 28.025(b-2), as amended by HB 5, requires the SBOE to provide for advanced courses that students may take to comply

with curriculum requirements for advanced courses in English, mathematics, and science following the successful completion, respectively, of

- English 1, English 2, and English 3;
- Algebra 1 and geometry; and
- any advanced science course.

In 2013, the 83rd Legislature enacted HB 2201 by Farney, which also amended sec. 28.025(b-2). It requires the SBOE to allow a student to comply with curriculum requirements for the third and fourth mathematics or science credits by successfully completing an advanced career and technical course designated by the board as containing substantively similar and rigorous academic content.

DIGEST:

CSSB 826 would reenact Education Code, sec. 28.025(b-2) to harmonize differences between two versions of the subsection that were amended through the enactment in 2013 of HB 5 by Aycock and HB 2201 by Farney.

It also would amend Education Code, sec. 28.025(b-2) to allow a high school student under the foundation school program to enroll in an advanced English or mathematics course without first having successfully completed English I, English 2, and English 3 or Algebra 1 and geometry, as applicable.

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, and would apply beginning with the 2017-18 school year.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSSB 826 would give high school students critical scheduling options by allowing flexibility in the sequencing of English and math courses. The bill would correct an unintended consequence of HB 5, enacted in 2013, in setting curriculum requirements for the foundation school program. It would allow students the option of concurrently enrolling in lower-level

and upper-level English and math courses.

This flexibility would benefit students who wanted to graduate early from high school, those seeking to obtain an associate's degree along with their high school diploma, and those who might need to double up in a subject in order to graduate on time. One suburban district has estimated that 10 percent of its junior class is affected by the current sequencing requirement. Counselors and school administrators would work with students on their graduation plans to ensure that courses were taken in an appropriate progression.

The bill also would provide districts with instructional flexibility to offer a math course sequence of Algebra I and Algebra 2 followed by geometry, which could better align with instruction in science courses.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSSB 826 would address a problem that affects a small portion of students by eliminating the reasonable sequencing of English and math courses. It is generally not appropriate for a student to take advanced courses before passing foundational courses, and this bill could result in students failing an advanced class because they had not mastered the content in prerequisite courses.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSSB 826 should be made effective for the current school year to help those students who will lose their credit for Algebra 2 as an advanced math course because they took it at the same time they took geometry.

NOTES:

CSSB 826 differs from the Senate-passed version in that the committee substitute would reenact sec. 28.025(b-2) to reflect the language in HB 2201 by Farney.

Two House companion bills, HB 1531 by VanDeaver and HB 1854 by Huberty, were referred to the House Committee on Public Education on March 9.