

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1146
By: Shapiro
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The 78th Texas Legislature created a Middle College Education Pilot Program, which was designed to test the effectiveness of a combined high school/college program in Texas as part of the Texas High School Project. Based on the success of this program and other similar programs around the country, S.B. 1146 permanently establishes this type of program in Texas. The Early College Education Program will allow at-risk students from grades 9 through 12 to simultaneously complete high school, and either an associate's degree or 60 hours of college credit. The program will provide students with the services they need to overcome educational obstacles and succeed after graduation. The program will also use the lessons learned through the pilot program to improve the articulation agreements between school districts and institutions of higher education, and to involve the P-16 Council throughout the project.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 29.908, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 29.908, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 29.908. New heading: EARLY COLLEGE EDUCATION PROGRAM. (a) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish and administer an early, rather than middle, college education program (program), rather than pilot program, for students who are at risk of dropping out of high school or who wish to accelerate completion of the high school program. Defines "student at risk of dropping out of school," for this subsection, rather than section.

(b) Sets forth modified program requirements.

(b-1) Sets forth requirements for certain articulation agreements.

(b-2) Requires the P-16 Council to provide guidance in case of any conflict that arises between parties to said articulation agreements.

(c) Provides that a student participating in program is entitled to the benefits of the Foundation School Program in proportion to the amount of time spent by the student on high school courses, in accordance with rules adopted by the commission, while completing the course of study established by the applicable articulation agreement.

(d) Authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to administer the program. Authorizes the rules to provide for giving preference in receiving program benefits to a student who is in the first generation of the student's family to attend college and to establish other distinctions or criteria based on student need. Requires the commissioner to consult the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in administering the program. Authorizes the P-16 Council to make recommendations, including recommendations for rules, concerning administration of the program.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.