

- SUBJECT:** Including the average median grade in a class on a student's transcript
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Branch, Alonzo, Clardy, Darby, Murphy
2 nays — Howard, Raney
0 absent — Patrick, Martinez
- WITNESSES:** For — Roger Benjamin; Scott Elliot; Thomas Lindsay, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Dennis Scharp, North Texas Citizen's Lobby; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kathy Barber, NFIB/Texas; Bill Hammond, Texas Association of Business)

Against — None
- DIGEST:** HB 3498 would require each general academic teaching institution to include on a college student's transcript the average grade awarded in a class for each class attempted by the student. In classes in which letter grades were awarded, the institution would include on the transcript the median grade that was awarded to all students in the class. The average or median grade would be placed immediately to the right of the student's individual grade.

Average or median grades would not be shown for pass-fail courses, independent study credit, or classes with 10 or fewer students.

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, 2013. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board would adopt rules to administer the requirements of the program as soon as practicable. The board would be allowed to use emergency rule-making protocols.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 3498 would help combat the nefarious effects of grade inflation by showing how a student's individual grade compared with the average or median grade awarded in the class. This would tell prospective employers whether a given student's high grade point average was the product of

truly exceptional work or if the student's work was simply average.

Grade inflation hides poor learning outcomes. Today, an A is the most common grade given in college. An A is awarded 43 percent of the time. In public colleges and universities, 73 percent of all grades are As or Bs and in private colleges and universities 86 percent are As and Bs. Yet, 36 percent of students surveyed show little to no increase in fundamental academic skills such as critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing after four years of college education. Grades are no longer an accurate measure of ability or student outcome. HB 3498 would help show the true value of a grade given in any particular class.

Transparency would be worth it. An honest transcript would force students to be more competitive. Knowing the true value of their grade would be displayed would force students to step up and work harder in school. This would make Texas students more competitive than those with less transparent transcripts from private schools or from out of state.

HB 3498 would help parents and students earn real value on their degrees. While employers would benefit from the bill, the real benefit would be that the families and students would receive grades that meant something.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The bill would be a solution in search of a problem. While there is some evidence of grade inflation, the case has not been made that it is resulting in serious harm.

The bill could end up hurting the job prospects of Texas graduates when compared with private college graduates or graduates from schools outside of Texas. It is important not to put Texas grads at a disadvantage when the job market still has not recovered from the recent recession.

It is inappropriate to create a state law to solve an industry hiring problem. If employers are having trouble differentiating between candidates, they should change their selection process rather than imposing a mandate on the higher education system to solve it for them. Industry should be employing skills and other tests to select the best candidates.