

SUBJECT: Supporting academic achievement and postsecondary planning

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 10 ayes — Aycock, Allen, Bohac, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Galindo, Huberty, K. King, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — González

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, March 30 — 30-0

WITNESSES: For — Kim Alexander, Roscoe Collegiate ISD; (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Anderson, Arlington ISD Board of Trustees; Mike Meroney, Huntsman Corp., BASF Corp., Sherwin Alumina, Co.; Jay Barksdale, Metro 8 Chambers of Commerce; Susie Shields, Port of San Antonio, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; Dwight Harris, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Ned Munoz and Cathy Dewitt, Texas Association of Business; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Marisha Negovetich, Texas Association of School Boards; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Lindsay Gustafson, Texas Classroom Teachers Organization; Jennifer Bergland, Texas Computer Education Association; Michael White, Texas Construction Association; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Michael Barba, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Colby Nichols, Texas Rural Education Association; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Les Findeisen, Texas Trucking Association; Daniel Womack, The Dow Chemical Company; Melody Chatelle, United Ways of Texas; Larry McGinnis, U.S. Steel)

Against — None

On — Melissa Henderson, Educate Texas; JD Janda, Georgetown ISD; Robert Floyd, Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education; Jan Friese,

Texas Counseling Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Monica Martinez, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 28.009(a) requires school districts to implement a program under which students may earn the equivalent of at least 12 semester credit hours of college credit in high school. That credit may be earned through advanced placement courses, international baccalaureate courses, local and statewide articulated courses, or dual credit courses.

19 TAC, part 1, ch. 4, subch. D, sec. 4.85(b)(8) limits high school juniors and seniors to enrolling in no more than two dual credit courses per semester. The rule allows exceptions for high school students with demonstrated outstanding academic performance and approval by their high school principal and the chief academic officer of the college to enroll in a maximum of 15 semester credit hours.

The 83rd Legislature in 2013 enacted HB 5 by Aycock, which revised the high school curriculum and allowed students to earn an endorsement on their diplomas and transcripts in five different areas of study. Some say the law would be more effective if students were given instruction at a younger age regarding their options for graduation plans, higher education, and career opportunities.

DIGEST: CSSB 13 would remove limitations on dual credit courses and create academies for school counselors to receive training in preparing students for high school graduation plans and postsecondary success.

Dual credit. The bill would prohibit the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board from adopting a rule that would limit the number of dual credit courses or hours in which a high school student could enroll each semester or academic year. The rules also could not limit the total number of dual credit courses or hours in which a high school student could enroll while in high school.

A course offered for joint high school and junior college credit would have to be taught by a qualified instructor approved or selected by the

public junior college. An instructor would be considered qualified if the instructor held a doctoral or master's degree in the discipline that was the subject of the course; or a master's degree in another discipline with a concentration that required a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the discipline that was the course's subject.

The bill would set a 60-day deadline for public junior colleges to approve or reject an application for approval to teach a course at a high school that was submitted by an instructor employed by the school district, organization, or other person that operated the high school with which the junior college was offering the course.

The bill would amend the Labor Code to expand the Texas Workforce Commission's Skills Development Fund to include an award to a school district to be used with a lower-division institution of higher education to support courses offered for joint high school and college-level credit or offered under a college credit career or technical education program that leads to an industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate.

Outreach materials. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) would be required to develop uniform public outreach materials to explain the importance and the details of public school curriculum changes made by the 83rd Legislature in HB 5 by Aycock and subsequent decisions by the State Board of Education.

The bill would detail what must be in the materials, including:

- the basic career and college readiness components of each endorsement that can be earned by completing the curriculum requirements;
- the curriculum requirements to gain automatic college admission under the top 10 percent law; and
- applicable course, graduation plan, and endorsement requirements for financial aid authorized for certain state-supported financial aid programs.

Each school district would be required to provide instruction to students in 7th or 8th grade in preparing for high school, college, and a career. The instruction must include information regarding:

- creation of a high school personal graduation plan;
- the distinguished level of achievement;
- each endorsement based on the completion of curriculum requirements;
- college readiness standards; and
- potential career choices and the education needed to enter those careers.

This instruction requirement would apply beginning with the 2015-16 school year.

Counseling academies. The bill would require the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Texas at Austin to develop postsecondary education and career counseling academies for school counselors working at middle, junior high, or high schools. The center would create these academies with input from TEA, school counselors, the Texas Workforce Commission, higher education institutions, and business, community, and school leaders.

Academies would provide counselors with knowledge and skills to provide counseling to students on postsecondary success and career planning. Information also would be provided on available methods to earn credit for a course not offered at a student's school, college admission requirements, regional workforce needs, and mentorships and business partnerships.

A school counselor who attended the academy would be entitled to receive a stipend in an amount determined by the center. Any stipend received could not be considered in determining whether a district was paying the school counselor the minimum monthly salary specified in the statute.

The 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, 2015.

NOTES:

The Legislative Budget Board estimates the bill would have a negative impact on general revenue related funds of \$18.3 million in fiscal 2016-17.