

1-1 By: Gates, et al. H.B. No. 2554  
 1-2 (Senate Sponsor - Schwertner, et al.)  
 1-3 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 17, 2021;  
 1-4 May 17, 2021, read first time and referred to Committee on  
 1-5 Education; May 24, 2021, reported favorably by the following vote:  
 1-6 Yeas 7, Nays 2; May 24, 2021, sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8 Taylor	X			
1-9 Lucio			X	
1-10 Bettencourt	X			
1-11 Hall	X			
1-12 Hughes	X			
1-13 Menéndez		X		
1-14 Paxton	X			
1-15 Perry	X			
1-16 Powell		X		
1-17 Schwertner	X			
1-18 West			X	

1-20 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
 1-21 AN ACT

1-22 relating to the operation by a school district of a vocational  
 1-23 education program to provide eligible high school students with  
 1-24 vocational and educational training under a plan for the issuance  
 1-25 of a high school diploma and the application of certain  
 1-26 student-based allotments under the public school finance system.

1-27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-28 ARTICLE 1. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1-29 SECTION 1.01. Subtitle F, Title 2, Education Code, is  
 1-30 amended by adding Chapter 30B to read as follows:

1-31 CHAPTER 30B. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1-32 Sec. 30B.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "board" means  
 1-33 the State Board of Education.

1-34 Sec. 30B.002. PURPOSE. The purpose of a vocational  
 1-35 education program operated under this chapter and authorized as a  
 1-36 campus or campus program under a charter granted under Subchapter  
 1-37 C, Chapter 12, is to provide public education to high school  
 1-38 students whose educational needs are better served by focused  
 1-39 vocational education and training.

1-40 Sec. 30B.003. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM. (a) Each  
 1-41 vocational education program granted a charter under Subchapter C,  
 1-42 Chapter 12, and operating under this chapter shall offer students  
 1-43 who reside in the district a program that is aligned with:

1-44 (1) industry-recognized credentials and certificates  
 1-45 included in the inventory required by Section 29.189; or

1-46 (2) industry-defined and industry-recognized skill  
 1-47 standards developed under Section 2308.109, Government Code.

1-48 (b) The board shall establish minimum curriculum  
 1-49 requirements for a vocational education program operated under this  
 1-50 chapter. In providing curriculum requirements, the board shall  
 1-51 require the successful completion of not more than 24 credits for  
 1-52 graduation and the issuance of a diploma under Section 30B.004. Not  
 1-53 less than 10 credits of the minimum curriculum requirements must be  
 1-54 credits earned in vocational education courses offered under the  
 1-55 program.

1-56 (c) A vocational education program may require the  
 1-57 completion of additional credits that are not included in the  
 1-58 minimum curriculum requirements established by the board, as  
 1-59 requirements for graduation and the issuance of a diploma under  
 1-60 Section 30B.004 provided that the program does not require the  
 1-61 successful completion of more than 24 credits.

2-1           (d) In providing the minimum curriculum requirements under  
2-2 Subsection (b), the board shall require:  
2-3           (1) one-half credit in a course that provides  
2-4 instruction in the basic knowledge and skills necessary to:  
2-5           (A) successfully run an independent business;  
2-6 and  
2-7           (B) develop entrepreneurship;  
2-8           (2) one-half credit in a course providing instruction  
2-9 regarding the relationship between business and government; and  
2-10           (3) one-half credit in a course in industrial arts.  
2-11           (e) The board by rule may provide curriculum standards for  
2-12 the courses described by Subsection (d).  
2-13           (f) The board by rule shall allow for a student to satisfy  
2-14 the one-half credit requirement for a course described by:  
2-15           (1) Subsection (d)(2) by earning one-half credit for a  
2-16 course in government offered under the foundation high school  
2-17 program; and  
2-18           (2) Subsection (d)(3) by earning one-half credit for a  
2-19 course in fine arts offered under the foundation high school  
2-20 program.  
2-21           (g) The board by rule may require that one or more courses  
2-22 described by Subsection (d) or (f) provide basic instruction in  
2-23 technical writing.  
2-24           (h) In offering a vocational education program under this  
2-25 chapter, a school district may form partnerships between the  
2-26 district and public junior colleges, public technical institutes,  
2-27 public state colleges, and any other public postsecondary  
2-28 institutions in this state offering academic or technical education  
2-29 or vocational training under a certificate program or an associate  
2-30 degree program.  
2-31           (i) A school district may use state funding received under  
2-32 Chapter 48 that is available for the purpose to pay tuition costs  
2-33 for district students enrolled in the district's vocational  
2-34 education program and receiving academic or technical education or  
2-35 vocational training from a college or institution under a  
2-36 partnership entered into under Subsection (h).  
2-37           Sec. 30B.004. VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.  
2-38 Notwithstanding any other law, agency rule, or school district  
2-39 policy, a student who successfully completes the course  
2-40 requirements for a district's vocational education program is  
2-41 entitled to receive a high school diploma from the district in  
2-42 accordance with commissioner rules concerning high school  
2-43 graduation requirements for students obtaining a high school  
2-44 diploma under a district's vocational education program.  
2-45           Sec. 30B.005. ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY. A student is  
2-46 eligible to enroll in a school district's vocational education  
2-47 program if:  
2-48           (1) the district has received the form indicating  
2-49 informed consent for the student under Section 30B.006; and  
2-50           (2) the student attends a high school campus of the  
2-51 district and has completed the student's 10th grade year.  
2-52           Sec. 30B.006. INFORMED CONSENT. (a) Before a student may  
2-53 enroll in a school district's vocational education program, the  
2-54 student and the student's parent, guardian, or other person  
2-55 standing in parental relation to the student must be advised by a  
2-56 school counselor concerning:  
2-57           (1) specific benefits of graduating under the  
2-58 foundation high school program established under Section 28.025;  
2-59           (2) specific benefits of graduating under a vocational  
2-60 education program with a diploma and earning industry-recognized  
2-61 credentials through the program;  
2-62           (3) the differences between the curriculum  
2-63 requirements for obtaining a diploma under a vocational education  
2-64 program and the curriculum requirements for obtaining a diploma  
2-65 under the foundation high school program, including specific  
2-66 foundation high school program courses that will be replaced by  
2-67 vocational education program courses; and  
2-68           (4) the number of additional credits that may be  
2-69 required to graduate under the foundation high school program if

3-1 the student chooses to cease participation in a vocational  
 3-2 education program and resume participation in the foundation high  
 3-3 school program.

3-4 (b) After receiving the required counseling described by  
 3-5 Subsection (a), the student's parent, guardian, or other person  
 3-6 standing in parental relation to the student may provide written  
 3-7 permission for the student to enroll in the school district's  
 3-8 vocational education program, on a form adopted by the agency, to  
 3-9 the school counselor.

3-10 Sec. 30B.007. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS. (a) A school  
 3-11 district may adopt and administer assessment instruments necessary  
 3-12 for a student enrolled in the district's vocational education  
 3-13 program to earn an industry-recognized license, credential, or  
 3-14 certificate.

3-15 (b) Notwithstanding any other law, the commissioner may not  
 3-16 require that a student enrolled in a district's vocational  
 3-17 education program be administered an assessment instrument under  
 3-18 Section 39.023 that is not required to be administered to the  
 3-19 student under federal law.

3-20 (c) The commissioner may not waive the application of  
 3-21 Subsection (b) under Section 7.056 or any other law. This  
 3-22 subsection does not prohibit the commissioner from waiving the  
 3-23 administration of assessment instruments otherwise required to be  
 3-24 administered to students under federal law, in accordance with  
 3-25 waiver authority granted to the commissioner by the United States  
 3-26 Department of Education.

3-27 Sec. 30B.008. EXAM SUBSIDY. A student enrolled in a school  
 3-28 district's vocational education program is entitled to an exam  
 3-29 subsidy for an exam administered under Section 30B.007 that  
 3-30 qualifies the student for an industry-recognized license,  
 3-31 credential, or certificate.

3-32 Sec. 30B.009. ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS. (a) The  
 3-33 commissioner shall adopt a set of achievement indicators for school  
 3-34 district students enrolled in a district's vocational education  
 3-35 program based on recommendations provided by the Texas Workforce  
 3-36 Investment Council.

3-37 (b) The achievement indicators adopted by the commissioner  
 3-38 must measure outcomes for a school district's vocational education  
 3-39 program with respect to:

3-40 (1) preparing students for success in:  
 3-41 (A) achieving industry-recognized licenses,  
 3-42 credentials, and certificates;  
 3-43 (B) training in postsecondary occupational  
 3-44 programs; and  
 3-45 (C) entering the workforce;

3-46 (2) reducing outcome differentials among students  
 3-47 from different racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic  
 3-48 backgrounds; and

3-49 (3) informing parents and employers regarding the  
 3-50 performance of school district vocational education programs and  
 3-51 students who enroll in those programs.

3-52 (c) Each school district that operates a vocational  
 3-53 education program under this chapter shall submit to the  
 3-54 commissioner all relevant information the commissioner determines  
 3-55 necessary to evaluate the district's vocational education program  
 3-56 based on the achievement indicators adopted under this section.

3-57 (d) The commissioner shall annually publish a report on the  
 3-58 performance of vocational education programs operated under this  
 3-59 chapter based on the achievement indicators.

3-60 Sec. 30B.010. MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS. (a) A  
 3-61 person employed by a school district as a vocational education  
 3-62 instructor of a district's vocational education program must have  
 3-63 demonstrated subject matter expertise related to the subject  
 3-64 taught, including:

3-65 (1) professional work experience;  
 3-66 (2) formal training and education;  
 3-67 (3) holding a relevant, active, industry-recognized  
 3-68 license, credential, or certificate; or  
 3-69 (4) any combination of Subdivisions (1), (2), and (3).

4-1 (b) A person employed by a school district as a vocational  
4-2 education instructor of a district's vocational education program  
4-3 must have received at least 20 hours of classroom management  
4-4 training as determined by the board of trustees of the district.

4-5 Sec. 30B.011. MEMBERSHIP IN TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF  
4-6 TEXAS. A school district employee who provides services under the  
4-7 district's vocational education program and qualifies for  
4-8 membership in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas shall be  
4-9 covered under the system to the same extent another qualified  
4-10 employee of a school district is covered.

4-11 Sec. 30B.012. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS. (a) A  
4-12 school district operating a vocational education program under this  
4-13 chapter may partner with private sector businesses to ensure  
4-14 students have sufficient opportunities to participate in  
4-15 apprenticeship training programs and other workplace-based  
4-16 education.

4-17 (b) A school district may sponsor apprenticeship training  
4-18 programs under Chapter 133 for students enrolled in the district's  
4-19 vocational education program.

4-20 Sec. 30B.013. LIMITATION ON CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION  
4-21 ALLOTMENT. For each student enrolled in a school district's  
4-22 vocational education program, the district's entitlement to the  
4-23 career and technology education allotment under Section 48.106 is  
4-24 limited to the amount determined by the commissioner in accordance  
4-25 with Subsection (a-1) of that section.

4-26 ARTICLE 2. OPERATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AS CAMPUS OR  
4-27 CAMPUS PROGRAM CHARTER

4-28 SECTION 2.01. Section 12.056, Education Code, is amended by  
4-29 adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

4-30 (c) Notwithstanding Subsection (b), requirements related to  
4-31 high school graduation under Section 28.025 do not apply to the  
4-32 issuance of a diploma under a vocational education program under  
4-33 Chapter 30B operated as a campus or campus program under a charter  
4-34 granted under this subchapter if the program is administered in  
4-35 accordance with Chapter 30B and any applicable rules adopted by the  
4-36 State Board of Education under that chapter.

4-37 SECTION 2.02. Section 28.016(b), Education Code, is amended  
4-38 to read as follows:

4-39 (b) The instruction must include information regarding:

4-40 (1) the creation of a high school personal graduation  
4-41 plan under Section 28.02121;

4-42 (2) the distinguished level of achievement described  
4-43 by Section 28.025(b-15);

4-44 (3) each endorsement described by Section  
4-45 28.025(c-1);

4-46 (4) college readiness standards; ~~and~~

4-47 (5) potential career choices and the education needed  
4-48 to enter those careers; and

4-49 (6) programs of study offered through a vocational  
4-50 education program under Chapter 30B operated as a campus or campus  
4-51 program under a charter granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12.

4-52 SECTION 2.03. Section 29.182(b), Education Code, is amended  
4-53 to read as follows:

4-54 (b) The state plan must include procedures designed to  
4-55 ensure that:

4-56 (1) all secondary and postsecondary students have the  
4-57 opportunity to participate in career and technology education  
4-58 programs;

4-59 (2) the state complies with requirements for  
4-60 supplemental federal career and technology education funding;

4-61 (3) career and technology education is established as  
4-62 a part of the total education system of this state and constitutes  
4-63 an option for student learning that provides a rigorous course of  
4-64 study consistent with the required curriculum under Section 28.002  
4-65 and under which a student may receive specific education in a career  
4-66 and technology program that:

4-67 (A) incorporates competencies leading to  
4-68 academic and technical skill attainment;

4-69 (B) leads to:

5-1 (i) an industry-recognized license,  
 5-2 credential, or certificate; or  
 5-3 (ii) at the postsecondary level, an  
 5-4 associate or baccalaureate degree;  
 5-5 (C) includes opportunities for students to earn  
 5-6 college credit for coursework; ~~and~~  
 5-7 (D) includes, as an integral part of the program,  
 5-8 participation by students and teachers in activities of career and  
 5-9 technical student organizations supported by the agency and the  
 5-10 State Board of Education; and  
 5-11 (E) includes the opportunity for students to  
 5-12 participate in focused vocational education through a vocational  
 5-13 education program under Chapter 30B operated as a campus or campus  
 5-14 program under a charter granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12; and  
 5-15 (4) a school district provides, to the greatest extent  
 5-16 possible, to a student participating in a career and technology  
 5-17 education program opportunities to enroll in dual credit courses  
 5-18 designed to lead to a degree, license, or certification as part of  
 5-19 the program.

5-20 ARTICLE 3. APPLICATION OF CERTAIN STUDENT-BASED ALLOTMENTS  
 5-21 REGARDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENTS

5-22 SECTION 3.01. Section 48.106, Education Code, is amended by  
 5-23 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1) to read as  
 5-24 follows:

5-25 (a) Subject to Subsection (a-1), for ~~For~~ each full-time  
 5-26 equivalent student in average daily attendance in an approved  
 5-27 career and technology education program in grades 7 through 12, a  
 5-28 district is entitled to:

5-29 (1) an annual allotment equal to the basic allotment  
 5-30 multiplied by a weight of 1.35; and

5-31 (2) \$50 for each of the following in which the student  
 5-32 is enrolled:

5-33 (A) two or more advanced career and technology  
 5-34 education classes for a total of three or more credits;

5-35 (B) a campus designated as a P-TECH school under  
 5-36 Section 29.556; or

5-37 (C) a campus that is a member of the New Tech  
 5-38 Network and that focuses on project-based learning and work-based  
 5-39 education.

5-40 (a-1) For each full-time equivalent student in average  
 5-41 daily attendance in a vocational education program operated under  
 5-42 Chapter 30B and authorized as a campus or campus program under a  
 5-43 charter granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12, only the first 10  
 5-44 hours of instructional hours provided to those students under the  
 5-45 program each week qualify toward the district's entitlement to the  
 5-46 allotment under Subsection (a)(1), and the commissioner shall  
 5-47 proportionately reduce the amount of the entitlement accordingly to  
 5-48 an amount that reflects the limitation on qualified instructional  
 5-49 hours per week using a method adopted by the commissioner.

5-50 SECTION 3.02. Sections 48.110(f) and (h), Education Code,  
 5-51 are amended to read as follows:

5-52 (f) For purposes of this section, an annual graduate  
 5-53 demonstrates:

5-54 (1) college readiness if the annual graduate:

5-55 (A) achieves college readiness standards used  
 5-56 for accountability purposes under Chapter 39 on the ACT, the SAT, or  
 5-57 an assessment instrument designated by the Texas Higher Education  
 5-58 Coordinating Board under Section 51.334; and

5-59 (B) during a time period established by  
 5-60 commissioner rule, enrolls at a postsecondary educational  
 5-61 institution;

5-62 (2) career readiness if:

5-63 (A) the annual graduate:

5-64 (i) ~~(A)~~ achieves college readiness  
 5-65 standards used for accountability purposes under Chapter 39 on the  
 5-66 ACT, the SAT, or an assessment instrument designated by the Texas  
 5-67 Higher Education Coordinating Board under Section 51.334; and

5-68 (ii) ~~(B)~~ during a time period established  
 5-69 by commissioner rule, earns an industry-accepted certificate; or

6-1 (B) the annual graduate earns an  
6-2 industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate under a  
6-3 vocational education program under Chapter 30B; and

6-4 (3) military readiness if the annual graduate:

6-5 (A) achieves a passing score set by the  
6-6 applicable military branch on the Armed Services Vocational  
6-7 Aptitude Battery; and

6-8 (B) during a time period established by  
6-9 commissioner rule, enlists in the armed forces of the United  
6-10 States.

6-11 (h) On application by a school district, the commissioner  
6-12 may allow annual graduates from the district to satisfy the  
6-13 requirement for demonstrating career readiness under Subsection  
6-14 (f)(2)(A)(ii) [~~(f)(2)(B)~~] by successfully completing a coherent  
6-15 sequence of courses required to obtain an industry-accepted  
6-16 certificate. The district must demonstrate in the application that  
6-17 the district is unable to provide sufficient courses or programs to  
6-18 enable students enrolled at the district to earn an  
6-19 industry-accepted certificate within the time period established  
6-20 by the commissioner under Subsection (f)(2)(A)(ii) [~~(f)(2)(B)~~].  
6-21 The commissioner by rule shall provide the criteria required for an  
6-22 application under this subsection.

6-23 ARTICLE 4. TRANSITION; EFFECTIVE DATE

6-24 SECTION 4.01. This Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022  
6-25 school year.

6-26 SECTION 4.02. This Act takes effect immediately if it  
6-27 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each  
6-28 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.  
6-29 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate  
6-30 effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2021.

6-31 \* \* \* \* \*