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H.B. No. 20

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing the Applied Sciences Pathway program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter 2, Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 29.914 to read as follows:

Sec. 29.914. APPLIED SCIENCES PATHWAY PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Certificate program" and "institution of higher education" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) "Program" means the Applied Sciences Pathway program established under this section.

(b) The commissioner shall establish and administer the Applied Sciences Pathway program to provide opportunities for students to concurrently earn high school diplomas and certificates from institutions of higher education.

(c) The commissioner shall approve for participation in the program partnerships between school districts or open-enrollment charter schools and institutions of higher education to provide courses in a non-duplicative sequence of progressive achievement that lead to:

(1) a high school diploma; and

(2) completion of a certificate program with a successful job placement rate in high-wage, high-growth jobs in one of the following industries:

- 1           (A) plumbing and pipe fitting;
- 2           (B) electrical;
- 3           (C) welding;
- 4           (D) sheet metal;
- 5           (E) carpentry;
- 6           (F) masonry;
- 7           (G) diesel and heavy equipment;
- 8           (H) aviation maintenance;
- 9           (I) heating, ventilation, and air conditioning;
- 10          (J) construction management and inspection;
- 11          (K) mechanical and aerospace engineering;
- 12          (L) industrial maintenance and processes;
- 13          (M) robotics and automation;
- 14          (N) information technology and cybersecurity;
- 15          (O) oil and gas exploration and production;
- 16          (P) refining and chemical processes;
- 17          (Q) transportation distribution and logistics;
- 18          (R) manufacturing and industrial technology;
- 19          (S) electronics technology; or
- 20          (T) automotive technology.

21           (c-1) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the  
22 commissioner may revise the industries approved for purposes of  
23 Subsection (c)(2) once every five years to reflect current labor  
24 market trends.

25           (d) A partnership participating in the program must:  
26               (1) enable the school district or open-enrollment  
27 charter school to provide at least one course of study described by

1 Subsection (c) through a partnership with an institution of higher  
2 education under the program;

3 (2) provide for a course of study described by  
4 Subsection (c) that enables a participating student in grade level  
5 11 or 12 to concurrently:

6 (A) enroll in a certificate program described by  
7 Subsection (c)(2) at the partnering institution of higher education  
8 under which the student may receive instruction from an instructor  
9 employed by the institution and any appropriate work-based learning  
10 opportunities from the institution and earn:

11 (i) a level one or level two certificate, as  
12 defined by the commissioner; or

13 (ii) another certificate approved by  
14 commissioner rule; and

15 (B) satisfy high school graduation requirements  
16 and receive a high school diploma;

17 (3) require the partnering school district or  
18 open-enrollment charter school to permit all district or school  
19 students in grade level 11 or 12 to enroll in a course of study  
20 provided under Subdivision (2);

21 (4) be governed by an articulation agreement between  
22 the partnering school district or open-enrollment charter school  
23 and institution of higher education; and

24 (5) meet any other requirements established by  
25 commissioner rule.

26 (e) The commissioner may approve the substitution of a  
27 credit in a subject area required for high school graduation under

1 Section 28.025 with a credit in a career and technology education  
2 course provided by an institution of higher education under the  
3 program that substantially covers the essential knowledge and  
4 skills of the course for which it is substituted. This subsection  
5 may not be construed to limit the number of substituted credits a  
6 student may earn while participating in the program.

7 (f) A career and technology education course authorized as a  
8 substitute credit under Subsection (e) may not count:

9 (1) for more than one credit toward the student's high  
10 school graduation requirements; or

11 (2) as a credit for more than one subject area.

12 (g) Time that a student spends participating in the program  
13 is counted as part of the minimum number of instructional hours  
14 required for a student to be considered a full-time student in  
15 average daily attendance for purposes of Section 48.005.

16 (h) This section may not be construed to:

17 (1) prevent a student's participation in career and  
18 technology education or dual credit courses before the student  
19 begins participating in the program; or

20 (2) authorize the commissioner to require approval by  
21 the commissioner for partnerships between school districts or  
22 open-enrollment charter schools and institutions of higher  
23 education for purposes other than the program, including  
24 partnerships to provide dual credit courses.

25 (i) The commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to  
26 administer the program.

27 SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2025-2026

1 school year.

2           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
3 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
4 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
5 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
6 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.