

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 448
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Broadening the outlook of future leaders through international education strengthens their ability to think and act on a cooperative basis. International education is also a critical means for transferring knowledge and skills across borders and preparing a new generation of global citizens. Because our economy, markets, and social concerns are increasingly global in reach and complexity, today's students must develop both the knowledge and understanding required for effective participation in an international environment.

S.B. 448 establishes the Texas Academy for International Studies at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) to provide high school students with the opportunity to pursue international education. Student who enroll at the Texas Academy for International Studies will have the benefit of completing high school and their core college requirements while residing at TAMIU. They also will be able to take a variety of courses in international studies, become involved in community service, and take advantage of the many cultural opportunities in Laredo.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 87, Education Code, by adding Section 87.505, as follows:

Sec. 87.505. TEXAS ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES. (a) Defines "academy," "board," and "university."

(b) Provides that the Texas Academy of International Studies (academy) is a division of Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) and is under the management and control of the board of regents of the Texas A&M University System (board). Provides that the academy serves certain purposes, and sets forth said purposes.

(c) Provides that the academy is a residential, coeducational institution for selected Texas high school students with an interest and the potential to excel in international studies. Requires the academy to admit only high school juniors or seniors, except that the academy is authorized to admit a student with exceptional abilities who is not yet a high school junior. Requires the board to set aside adequate space on the TAMIU campus in Laredo to operate the academy and implement the purposes of this section. Requires the academy to operate on the same fall and spring semester basis as the university. Requires full-time students of the academy to enroll for both the fall and spring semesters. Requires faculty members of TAMIU to teach all academic classes at the academy. Authorizes a student of the academy to attend a college course offered by TAMIU and to receive college credit for that course.

(d) Provides that, except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the TAMIU administration has the same powers and duties with respect to the academy that the administration has with respect to TAMIU. Requires the board to consult with

the dean of the College of Education, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and other members of the administration as the board considers necessary concerning certain aspects of the academy. Requires the board, in consultation with TAMIU administration, to take certain steps relating to academy management, admission, and student and faculty issues.

(e) Prohibits the student-teacher ratio in all regular academic classes from exceeding 30 students for each classroom teacher, except under certain circumstances.

(f) Requires the academy to provide the university-level curriculum in a manner that is appropriate for certain aspects of development of high school juniors and seniors. Requires the administrative and counseling personnel of the academy to provide continuous support to and supervision of students.

(g) Entitles the academy, for each student enrolled there, to allotments from the foundation school fund under Chapter 42 (Foundation School Program) as if the academy were a school district without a tier one local share for the purposes of Section 42.253 (Distribution of Foundation School Fund). Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner), if in any academic year the amount of the allotments under this subsection exceeds the amount of state funds paid to the academy in the first fiscal year of the academy's operation, to set aside from the total amount of funds to which school districts are entitled under Section 42.253(c) (pertaining to the amount to which each school district is entitled) an amount equal to the excess amount and to distribute that amount to the academy. Requires the commissioner, after deducting the amount set aside and paid to the academy by the commissioner, to reduce the amount to which each district is entitled under Section 42.253(c). Provides the manner for conducting this reduction. Provides that a determination of the commissioner under this subsection is final and may not be appealed.

(h) Authorizes the board to use certain available funding, including grants, in establishing and operating the academy. Requires money spent by the academy to further the purposes of the academy prescribed by Subsection (b).

(i) Limits the liability of the state under Chapters 101 (Tort Claims) and 104 (State Liability for Conduct of Public Servants), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, for the academy and employees assigned to the academy and acting on behalf of the academy to the same extent that the liability of a school district and an employee of the school district is limited under certain sections of this code. Entitles an employee assigned to the academy to representation by the attorney general in a civil suit based on an action or omission of the employee in the course of the employee's employment, limits on liability, and indemnity under Chapters 104 and 108 (Limitation of Liability for Public Servants), Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

(j) Provides that, except as otherwise provided by this section, the academy is not subject to the provisions of this code, or to the rules of the Texas Education Agency, regulating public schools.

(k) Prohibits a student from beginning to attend the academy before the 2007 fall semester. Provides that this subsection expires August 31, 2008.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 25.086(a), Education Code, to include children enrolled in a job training program under 29 U.S.C. Section 2881 (Job Corps), rather than 29 U.S.C. Section 1501 (pertaining to the establishment of programs to prepare youth and adults preparing serious barriers to employment), et seq. as well as children enrolled at the academy amongst those exempt from the requirements of compulsory school attendance. Deletes text pertaining to the Job Training Partnership Act and its subsequent amendments.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 28.024, Education Code, to require a school district to grant a student credit toward the academic course requirements for high school graduation, up to a maximum of two years credit, for courses the student successfully completes at the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities under Section 96.707 (Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities), rather than Subchapter E, Chapter 108, the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science under Subchapter G (Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science), rather than Subchapter H (University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth), Chapter 105; or the Texas Academy of International Studies under Section 87.505. Makes non-substantive changes.

SECTION 4. Effective date:

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2005.