

AN ACT

relating to an early college education program to provide at-risk and other students accelerated high school graduation and college credit.

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

SECTION 1. Section 29.908, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 29.908. EARLY [~~MIDDLE~~] COLLEGE EDUCATION [~~PILOT~~] PROGRAM. (a) The commissioner shall establish and administer an early [~~a middle~~] college education [~~pilot~~] program for students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who wish to accelerate completion of the high school program [~~completion~~]. For purposes of this subsection [~~section~~], "student at risk of dropping out of school" has the meaning assigned by Section 29.081.

(b) The program must:

(1) provide for a course of study that enables a participating student to combine high school courses and college-level courses during grade levels 9 through [~~11 and~~] 12;

(2) allow a participating student to complete high school and, on or before the fifth anniversary of the date of the student's first day of high school, receive [~~at least~~] a high school diploma and either:

(A) an associate degree; or

(B) at least 60 semester credit hours toward a

1 baccalaureate degree [~~at the time of graduation~~];

2 (3) include articulation agreements [~~under Subchapter~~
3 ~~T, Chapter 61,~~] with colleges, universities, and technical schools
4 in this state to provide a participating student access to
5 postsecondary educational and training opportunities at a [~~on the~~
6 ~~campus of the~~] college, university, or technical school; and

7 (4) provide a participating student flexibility in
8 class scheduling and academic mentoring.

9 (b-1) Each articulation agreement under Subsection (b)(3)
10 must address:

11 (1) curriculum alignment;

12 (2) instructional materials;

13 (3) the instructional calendar;

14 (4) courses of study;

15 (5) eligibility of students for higher education
16 financial assistance;

17 (6) student enrollment and attendance;

18 (7) grading periods and policies; and

19 (8) administration of statewide assessment
20 instruments under Subchapter B, Chapter 39.

21 (b-2) The P-16 Council established under Section 61.077
22 shall provide guidance in case of any conflict that arises between
23 parties to an articulation agreement under Subsection (b)(3).

24 (c) A student participating in the program is entitled to
25 the benefits of the Foundation School Program in proportion to the
26 amount of time spent by the student on high school courses, in
27 accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner, while completing

1 the course of study established by the applicable articulation
2 agreement under Subsection (b)(3). The commissioner may accept
3 gifts, grants, and donations from any source, including private and
4 nonprofit organizations, to pay any costs of the program not
5 covered by the student's Foundation School Program benefits.

6 (d) The commissioner may adopt rules as necessary to
7 administer the program. The rules may provide for giving
8 preference in receiving program benefits to a student who is in the
9 first generation of the student's family to attend college and may
10 establish other distinctions or criteria based on student need.
11 The commissioner shall consult the Texas Higher Education
12 Coordinating Board in [~~establishing and~~] administering the
13 program. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may adopt
14 rules as necessary to exercise its powers and duties under this
15 section. The P-16 Council may make recommendations, including
16 recommendations for rules, concerning administration of the
17 program.

18 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1146 passed the Senate on April 21, 2005, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0; and that the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 27, 2005, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1146 passed the House, with amendment, on May 25, 2005, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, two present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor