

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 3485  
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Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, the high school graduation rate nationwide is between 68 and 71 percent. According to Civic Enterprises and Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 47% of high school dropouts surveyed said one of the major factors in their decision to dropout was that their classes were boring. Student disengagement is reflected also by the overwhelming number of high school graduates that are placed in remedial courses when they enter post secondary institutions. Both types of students would likely experience greater success by taking a course of study that they believed was more relevant to their future. By gaining more from their educational experience they would be better prepared to enter college and the workforce, and thus contribute more to the state's economy.

A survey conducted by the Texas Education Agency found that in the 2004-2005 school year about 73% of students in Texas took career and technology education (CTE) classes. Most, however, took only one. There is evidence that students taking a sequence of CTE courses have better attendance, higher test scores and higher graduation rates than those who do not. Most good jobs today require some sort of post-secondary training or degree. Many CTE course sequences that begin in high school lead students into college and result in certificates, licenses and degrees that meet industry standards.

Employers across Texas have many current job openings they cannot fill because of a shortage of qualified applicants, and they anticipate even greater challenges replacing the large numbers of their skilled workers that will retire over the next few years. The workforce shortages are hampering productivity, disrupting delivery schedules and making it difficult for businesses to operate in Texas. In more and more instances, the situation is approaching crisis proportions. Many of these positions require just the sort of preparation provided by a solid sequence of CTE courses.

The purpose of this bill is to raise awareness about the value of Career and Technology Education in Texas by including it in existing policies that impact student course-taking decisions. In this way, students, parents, and educators will consider CTE to be a viable course of study through which they can experience educational success and prepare themselves to take advantage of the many present and future opportunities of the Texas job market.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the opinion of the committee that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board of Education in SECTION 1 of this bill. In addition, current rulemaking authority of the State Board of Education is modified in SECTION 4 of the bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

The bill provides that, not later than November 1, 2007, the Texas Education Agency (agency) is required to establish a panel to review and recommend revisions to the career and technical education curriculum, and review and recommend revisions for the program in which high schools and articulated postsecondary institutions allow high school students to take advanced technical credit courses.

The bill provides that the panel shall consist of individuals with expertise in developing or administering career and technical education programs, and employers who hire students who

have obtained certification or credentials under a career and technical education program. Members of the panel serve on a voluntary basis without compensation.

The bill provides that, not later than November 1, 2008, the panel is required to complete the review described above and make recommendations to the State Board of Education as necessary to increase academic rigor of career and technical education curriculum, and improve and increase participation in a specified program for advanced technical credit courses.

The bill provides that, not later than September 1, 2009, the State Board of Education by rule is required to revise the essential knowledge and skills of the career and technical education curriculum based on the recommendations of the panel. The State Board of Education shall require school districts to provide instruction in the revised career and technical education curriculum beginning with the 2010-2011 school year.

The provisions described above relating to the review panel expire September 1, 2014.

The bill amends current provisions that require each school district to implement a program under which students may earn the equivalent of at least 12 semester credit hours of college credit in high school by adding a provision authorizing that college credit may be earned through international baccalaureate, advanced placement, or dual credit courses, certain specified articulated postsecondary courses, or any combination of the above described courses.

The bill provides that school districts will be required to annually report to the agency the number of district students, including career and technical education students, who have participated in the program and earned college credit, and the cumulative number of courses in which participating district students have enrolled and college credit hours the students have earned. The bill adds definitions of "career and technical student," and "sequence of courses."

The bill provides that each school district is encouraged to establish for each student entering grade nine a personal graduation plan that identifies a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, and facilitates the student's transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The bill provides that, in adopting rules under Subsection (b-1) of Section 28.025, the State Board of Education shall allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for a mathematics or science course under Subsection (b-1)(1) of such section by successfully completing a career and technical course designated by the State Board of Education as containing rigorous academic content that is substantively appropriate. A student is authorized to use the option provided by this provision for not more than two courses.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

#### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

The substitute adds the provisions relating to the establishment of a review panel for career and technical education curriculum, as described in the ANALYSIS section above.

The substitute is a Legislative Council draft and makes certain changes in style and terminology in accordance with Legislative Council drafting guidelines.

The original defines "career and technology student." The substitute defines "career and technical student." There are certain differences between the definitions. The substitute defines ""sequence of courses." The original does not include this definition.

The substitute adds a provision that each school district is encouraged to establish for each student entering grade nine a personal graduation plan that identifies a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, and facilitates the student's transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

Both the original and the substitute amend Section 28.009, Education Code, relating to the courses through which students may earn hours of college credit in high school; however, the description of courses is somewhat different.

The substitute provides that, in adopting rules under Subsection (b-1) of Section 28.025, the State Board of Education shall allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for a mathematics or science course under Subsection (b-1)(1) of such section by successfully completing a career and technical course designated by the State Board of Education as containing rigorous academic content that is substantively appropriate. A student is authorized to use the option provided by this provision for not more than two courses. The original does not include this provision.

Both bills included provisions relating to an annual reporting requirement relating to students earning college credit while in high school, but the specifics of the reporting requirements are different in each bill.