

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2994
By: Ashby
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that certain legislative direction is insufficient as it pertains to workforce continuing education courses offered at public junior colleges and with regard to how the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board should treat minors enrolled in these courses for the reimbursement of contact hours. H.B. 2994 seeks to provide further direction with regard to workforce continuing education offered by public junior colleges.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2994 amends the Education Code to require contact hours attributable to the enrollment of a student in a workforce continuing education course offered by a public junior college to be included in the contact hours used to determine the college's proportionate share of state money appropriated and distributed to public junior colleges, regardless of whether the course is taken by a student who is not an adult or whether the college waives all or part of the tuition or fees for the course. The bill defines "adult" as a person who is 17 years of age and has been awarded a high school diploma or its equivalent or who is 18 years of age or older, regardless of the person's previous educational experience, and "workforce continuing education" as a program of instruction that is designed primarily for adults and is intended, on completion by a participant, to prepare the participant to qualify to apply for and accept an employment offer or a job upgrade within a specific occupational category or to bring the participant's knowledge or skills up to date on new developments in a particular occupation or profession.

H.B. 2994 authorizes a public junior college to enter into an agreement with a public school district, organization, or other person that operates a high school to offer workforce continuing education courses to persons enrolled in a high school who are at least 16 years of age on the census date of the applicable course. The bill authorizes a public junior college to waive all or part of the tuition or fees charged to a student for a workforce continuing education course under the following circumstances:

- if the student is enrolled in high school; is 16 years of age or older, has had the disabilities of minority removed, and is not enrolled in secondary education; or is under the age of 18 and is incarcerated;
- if all or a significant portion of the college's costs for facilities, instructor salaries,

equipment, and other expenses for the course are covered by business, industry, or other local public or private entities; or

- if the course is taught in a federal correctional facility and the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other expenses for the course are funded by the federal government.

The bill establishes that a person who is enrolled in a school that is not formally organized as a high school is considered to be enrolled in high school for purposes of these provisions. The bill requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt any rules the coordinating board considers necessary for the administration of the bill's provisions and, in adopting those rules, to use the procedures established by the Negotiated Rulemaking Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.