

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
87R20128 GCB-F

H.B. 2554  
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Education  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

It has been noted that Texas has a lack of workforce development for in-demand, high-wage growth professions like plumbing, welding, construction, and electrical work, among others. With the increasing average age of master electricians and plumbers, it is clear that fewer young Texans are entering those fields, despite the opportunities they offer. While career and technical education in the public school system is effective in giving middle and high school students exposure to the skills needed to participate in many careers immediately after high school, a student simply does not have enough hours in the school day to simultaneously participate in the existing academic programs and pursue a rigorous vocational education that leads to a certification or credential.

H.B. 2554 provides students a new path to earn a high school diploma and graduate with industry-based credentials and on-the-job experience, enabling them to enter careers in these professions immediately.

H.B. 2554 amends current law relating to the operation by a school district of a vocational education program to provide eligible high school students with vocational and educational training under a plan for the issuance of a high school diploma and the application of certain student-based allotments under the public school finance system.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board of Education in SECTION 1.01 (Section 30B.003, Education Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

#### ARTICLE 1. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SECTION 1.01. Amends Subtitle F, Title 2, Education Code, by adding Chapter 30B, as follows:

#### CHAPTER 30B. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Sec. 30B.001. DEFINITION. Defines "board."

Sec. 30B.002. PURPOSE. Provides that the purpose of a vocational education program operated under this chapter and authorized as a campus or campus program under a charter granted under Subchapter C (Campus or Campus Program Charter), Chapter 12 (Charters), is to provide public education to high school students whose educational needs are better served by focused vocational education and training.

Sec. 30B.003. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM. (a) Requires that each vocational education program granted a charter under Subchapter C, Chapter 12, and operating under this chapter offer students who reside in the district a program that is aligned with industry-recognized credentials and certificates included in the inventory required by Section 29.189 (Inventory of Credentials and Certificates) or with industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards developed under Section 2308.109 (Duty to Develop Skill Standards), Government Code.

(b) Requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) to establish minimum curriculum requirements for a vocational education program operated under this chapter. Requires SBOE, in providing curriculum requirements, to require the successful completion of not more than 24 credits for graduation and the issuance of a diploma under Section 30B.004. Requires that not less than 10 credits of the minimum curriculum requirements be credits earned in vocational education courses offered under the program.

(c) Authorizes a vocational education program to require the completion of additional credits that are not included in the minimum curriculum requirements established by SBOE, as requirements for graduation and the issuance of a diploma under Section 30B.004 provided that the program does not require the successful completion of more than 24 credits.

(d) Requires SBOE, in providing the minimum curriculum requirements under Subsection (b), to require:

(1) one-half credit in a course that provides instruction in the basic knowledge and skills necessary to successfully run an independent business and to develop entrepreneurship;

(2) one-half credit in a course providing instruction regarding the relationship between business and government; and

(3) one-half credit in a course in industrial arts.

(e) Authorizes SBOE by rule to provide curriculum standards for the courses described by Subsection (d).

(f) Requires SBOE by rule to allow for a student to satisfy the one-half credit requirement for a course described by:

(1) Subsection (d)(2) by earning one-half credit for a course in government offered under the foundation high school program; and

(2) Subsection (d)(3) by earning one-half credit for a course in fine arts offered under the foundation high school program.

(g) Authorizes SBOE by rule to require that one or more courses described by Subsection (d) or (f) provide basic instruction in technical writing.

(h) Authorizes a school district, in offering a vocational education program under this chapter, to form partnerships between the district and public junior colleges, public technical institutes, public state colleges, and any other public postsecondary institutions in this state offering academic or technical education or vocational training under a certificate program or an associate degree program.

(i) Authorizes a school district to use state funding received under Chapter 48 (Foundation School Program) that is available for the purpose to pay tuition costs for district students enrolled in the district's vocational education program and receiving academic or technical education or vocational training from a college or institution under a partnership entered into under Subsection (h).

Sec. 30B.004. VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. Provides that, notwithstanding any other law, Texas Education Agency (TEA) rule, or school district policy, a student who successfully completes the course requirements for a district's vocational education program is entitled to receive a high school diploma from the district in accordance with commissioner of education (commissioner) rules concerning

high school graduation requirements for students obtaining a high school diploma under a district's vocational education program.

Sec. 30B.005. ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY. Provides that a student is eligible to enroll in a school district's vocational education program if the district has received the form indicating informed consent for the student under Section 30B.006 and if the student attends a high school campus of the district and has completed the student's 10th grade year.

Sec. 30B.006. INFORMED CONSENT. (a) Requires a student and the student's parent, guardian, or other person standing in parental relation to the student, before the student is authorized to enroll in a school district's vocational education program, to be advised by a school counselor concerning:

(1) specific benefits of graduating under the foundation high school program established under Section 28.025 (High School Diploma and Certificate; Academic Achievement Record);

(2) specific benefits of graduating under a vocational education program with a diploma and earning industry-recognized credentials through the program;

(3) the differences between the curriculum requirements for obtaining a diploma under a vocational education program and the curriculum requirements for obtaining a diploma under the foundation high school program, including specific foundation high school program courses that will be replaced by vocational education program courses; and

(4) the number of additional credits that are authorized to be required to graduate under the foundation high school program if the student chooses to cease participation in a vocational education program and resume participation in the foundation high school program.

(b) Authorizes the student's parent, guardian, or other person standing in parental relation to the student, after receiving the required counseling described by Subsection (a), to provide written permission for the student to enroll in the school district's vocational education program, on a form adopted by TEA, to the school counselor.

Sec. 30B.007. ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS. (a) Authorizes a school district to adopt and administer assessment instruments necessary for a student enrolled in the district's vocational education program to earn an industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate.

(b) Prohibits the commissioner, notwithstanding any other law, from requiring that a student enrolled in a district's vocational education program be administered an assessment instrument under Section 39.023 (Adoption and Administration of Instruments) that is not required to be administered to the student under federal law.

(c) Prohibits the commissioner from waiving the application of Subsection (b) under Section 7.056 (Waivers and Exemptions) or any other law. Provides that this subsection does not prohibit the commissioner from waiving the administration of assessment instruments otherwise required to be administered to students under federal law, in accordance with waiver authority granted to the commissioner by the United States Department of Education.

Sec. 30B.008. EXAM SUBSIDY. Provides that a student enrolled in a school district's vocational education program is entitled to an exam subsidy for an exam administered

under Section 30B.007 that qualifies the student for an industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate.

**Sec. 30B.009. ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS.** (a) Requires the commissioner to adopt a set of achievement indicators for school district students enrolled in a district's vocational education program based on recommendations provided by the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

(b) Requires that the achievement indicators adopted by the commissioner measure outcomes for a school district's vocational education program with respect to:

(1) preparing students for success in achieving industry-recognized licenses, credentials, and certificates, in training in postsecondary occupational programs, and in entering the workforce;

(2) reducing outcome differentials among students from different racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds; and

(3) informing parents and employers regarding the performance of school district vocational education programs and students who enroll in those programs.

(c) Requires each school district that operates a vocational education program under this chapter to submit to the commissioner all relevant information the commissioner determines necessary to evaluate the district's vocational education program based on the achievement indicators adopted under this section.

(d) Requires the commissioner to annually publish a report on the performance of vocational education programs operated under this chapter based on the achievement indicators.

**Sec. 30B.010. MINIMUM INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS.** (a) Requires a person employed by a school district as a vocational education instructor of a district's vocational education program to have demonstrated subject matter expertise related to the subject taught, including:

(1) professional work experience;

(2) formal training and education;

(3) holding a relevant, active, industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate; or

(4) any combination of Subdivisions (1), (2), and (3).

(b) Requires a person employed by a school district as a vocational education instructor of a district's vocational education program to have received at least 20 hours of classroom management training as determined by the board of trustees of the district.

**Sec. 30B.011. MEMBERSHIP IN TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF TEXAS.** Requires a school district employee who provides services under the district's vocational education program and qualifies for membership in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) to be covered under TRS to the same extent another qualified employee of a school district is covered.

**Sec. 30B.012. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS.** (a) Authorizes a school district operating a vocational education program under this chapter to partner with

private sector businesses to ensure students have sufficient opportunities to participate in apprenticeship training programs and other workplace-based education.

(b) Authorizes a school district to sponsor apprenticeship training programs under Chapter 133 (Apprenticeship System of Adult Career and Technology Education) for students enrolled in the district's vocational education program.

Sec. 30B.013. LIMITATION ON CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION ALLOTMENT. Provides that for each student enrolled in a school district's vocational education program, the district's entitlement to the career and technology education allotment under Section 48.106 (Career and Technology Education Allotment) is limited to the amount determined by the commissioner in accordance with Subsection (a-1) of that section.

## ARTICLE 2. OPERATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AS CAMPUS OR CAMPUS PROGRAM CHARTER

SECTION 2.01. Amends Section 12.056, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c), as follows:

(c) Provides that, notwithstanding Subsection (b) (relating to providing that a campus or program for which a charter is granted under Subchapter C is subject to certain criteria), requirements related to high school graduation under Section 28.025 do not apply to the issuance of a diploma under a vocational education program under Chapter 30B operated as a campus or campus program under a charter granted under Subchapter C (Campus or Campus Program Charter) if the program is administered in accordance with Chapter 30B and any applicable rules adopted by SBOE under that chapter.

SECTION 2.02. Amends Section 28.016(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires that the instruction in high school, college, and career preparation include certain information, including information regarding programs of study offered through a vocational education program under Chapter 30B operated as a campus or campus program under a charter granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2.03. Amends Section 29.182(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires that the state plan for career and technology education include procedures designed to ensure that:

(1) and (2) makes no changes to these subdivisions;

(3) career and technology education is established as a part of the total education system of this state and constitutes an option for student learning that provides a rigorous course of study consistent with the required curriculum under Section 28.002 (Required Curriculum) and under which a student is authorized to receive specific education in a career and technology program that:

(A) and (B) makes no changes to these paragraphs;

(C) makes a nonsubstantive change to this paragraph;

(D) makes no changes to this paragraph; and

(E) includes the opportunity for students to participate in focused vocational education through a vocational education program under Chapter 30B operated as a campus or campus program under a charter granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12; and

(4) makes no changes to this subdivision.

ARTICLE 3. APPLICATION OF CERTAIN STUDENT-BASED ALLOTMENTS  
REGARDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENTS

SECTION 3.01. Amends Section 48.106, Education Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1), as follows:

(a) Creates an exception under Subsection (a-1) and makes a nonsubstantive change.

(a-1) Provides that for each full-time equivalent student in average daily attendance in a vocational education program operated under Chapter 30B and authorized as a campus or campus program under a charter granted under Subchapter C, Chapter 12, only the first 10 hours of instructional hours provided to those students under the program each week qualify toward the district's entitlement to the allotment under Subsection (a)(1) (relating to entitling a district to an annual allotment equal to the basic allotment multiplied by a weight of 1.35), and requires the commissioner to proportionately reduce the amount of the entitlement accordingly to an amount that reflects the limitation on qualified instructional hours per week using a method adopted by the commissioner.

SECTION 3.02. Amends Sections 48.110(f) and (h), Education Code, as follows:

(f) Provides that for purposes of Section 48.110 (College, Career, or Military Readiness Outcomes Bonus), an annual graduate demonstrates:

(1) makes no changes to these subdivisions;

(2) career readiness if:

(A) creates this paragraph from existing text and makes nonsubstantive changes; or

(B) the annual graduate earns an industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate under a vocational education program under Chapter 30B; and

(3) makes no changes to this subdivision.

(h) Makes conforming changes to this subsection.

ARTICLE 4. TRANSITION; EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 4.01. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

SECTION 4.02. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.