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By:  Blanco S.B. No. 1702

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to course requirements for public high school students and a requirement to collect and report information regarding endorsements earned by public school students.

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

SECTION 1.  Section 28.002(c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c)  The State Board of Education, with the direct participation of educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers shall by rule identify the essential knowledge and skills of each subject of the required curriculum that all students should be able to demonstrate and that will be used in evaluating instructional materials under Chapter 31 and addressed on the assessment instruments required under Subchapter B, Chapter 39. As a condition of accreditation, the board shall require each district to provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills at appropriate grade levels and to require [~~make available to~~] each high school student in the district to complete an Algebra II course.

SECTION 2.  Sections 28.025(b), (b-1), and (b-2), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  A school district shall ensure that each student, on entering ninth grade, indicates in writing an endorsement under Subsection (c-1) that the student intends to earn. A district shall permit a student to choose, at any time, to earn an endorsement other than the endorsement the student previously indicated. A student may graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement if, after the student's sophomore year:

(1)  the student and the student's parent or person standing in parental relation to the student are advised by a school counselor of the specific benefits of graduating from high school with one or more endorsements and are provided the information regarding those endorsements collected under Section 28.02561; and

(2)  the student's parent or person standing in parental relation to the student files with a school counselor written permission, on a form adopted by the agency, allowing the student to graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement.

(b-1)  The State Board of Education by rule shall require that the curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program under Subsection (a) include a requirement that students successfully complete:

(1)  four credits in English language arts under Section 28.002(a)(1)(A), including one credit in English I, one credit in English II, one credit in English III, and one credit in an advanced English course authorized under Subsection (b-2);

(2)  three credits in mathematics under Section 28.002(a)(1)(B), including one credit in Algebra I, one credit in geometry, and one credit in Algebra II [~~any advanced mathematics course authorized under Subsection (b-2)~~];

(3)  three credits in science under Section 28.002(a)(1)(C), including one credit in biology, one credit in any advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2), and one credit in integrated physics and chemistry or in an additional advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2);

(4)  three credits in social studies under Section 28.002(a)(1)(D), including one credit in United States history, at least one-half credit in government and at least one-half credit in economics, and one credit in world geography or world history;

(5)  except as provided under Subsections (b-12), (b-13), and (b-14), two credits in the same language in a language other than English under Section 28.002(a)(2)(A);

(6)  five elective credits;

(7)  one credit in fine arts under Section 28.002(a)(2)(D); and

(8)  except as provided by Subsection (b-11), one credit in physical education under Section 28.002(a)(2)(C).

(b-2)  In adopting rules under Subsection (b-1), the State Board of Education shall:

(1)  provide for a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for an advanced English course under Subsection (b-1)(1), for an advanced mathematics course under Subsection (b-1)(2), and for any advanced science course under Subsection (b-1)(3) by successfully completing a course in the appropriate content area that has been approved as an advanced course by board rule or that is offered as an advanced course for credit without board approval as provided by Section 28.002(g-1); and

(2)  allow a student to comply with the curriculum requirements for the [~~third and fourth mathematics credits under Subsection (b-1)(2) or the~~] third and fourth science credits under Subsection (b-1)(3) by successfully completing an advanced career and technical course designated by the State Board of Education as containing substantively similar and rigorous academic content.

SECTION 3.  Subchapter B, Chapter 28, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 28.02561 to read as follows:

Sec. 28.02561.  COLLECTION OF INFORMATION REGARDING ENDORSEMENTS. (a) The agency shall require each school district to collect and submit to the agency the following information regarding district graduates who earned an endorsement under Section 28.025(c-1):

(1)  the endorsement earned under that section;

(2)  whether the graduate enrolled in postsecondary education;

(3)  the graduate's college major or workforce certificate or credential; and

(4)  the graduate's employment status.

(b)  The information collected under Subsection (a) shall be disaggregated by endorsement category and provided to a student and the student's parent or person standing in parental relation to the student under Subsection 28.025(b).

SECTION 4.  (a) Section 28.025(b-1), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies only to students entering the ninth grade during the 2021-2022 school year or a later school year. For students entering a grade above ninth grade during the 2021-2022 school year, Section 28.025(b-1), Education Code, as that section existed before amendment by this Act, applies, and that section is continued in effect for that purpose.

(b)  Section 28.025(b), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies only to students entering the ninth grade during the 2022-2023 school year or a later school year. For students entering a grade above ninth grade during the 2022-2023 school year, Section 28.025(b), Education Code, as that section existed before amendment by this Act, applies, and that section is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 5.  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, 2021.