

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R17767 CMO-D

H.B. 20
By: Gates et al. (Schwertner)
Education K-16
5/21/2025
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

H.B. 20 amends current law relating to establishing the Applied Sciences Pathway program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 29.914, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Section 29.914, as follows:

Sec. 29.914. APPLIED SCIENCES PATHWAY PROGRAM. (a) Defines "certificate program," "institution of higher education," and "program."

(b) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to establish and administer the Applied Sciences Pathway program (program) to provide opportunities for students to concurrently earn high school diplomas and certificates from institutions of higher education.

(c) Requires the commissioner to approve for participation in the program partnerships between school districts or open-enrollment charter schools and institutions of higher education to provide courses in a non-duplicative sequence of progressive achievement that lead to:

(1) a high school diploma; and

(2) completion of a certificate program with a successful job placement rate in high-wage, high-growth jobs in one of certain industries.

(c-1) Authorizes the commissioner, beginning with the 2027–2028 school year, to revise the industries approved for purposes of Subsection (c)(2) once every five years to reflect current labor market trends.

(d) Requires that a partnership participating in the program:

(1) enable the school district or open-enrollment charter school to provide at least one course of study described by Subsection (c) through a partnership with an institution of higher education under the program;

(2) provide for a course of study described by Subsection (c) that enables a participating student in grade level 11 or 12 to concurrently enroll in a certificate program described by Subsection (c)(2) at the partnering institution of higher education under which the student is authorized to receive instruction from an instructor employed by the institution and any appropriate work-based learning opportunities from the institution and earn a level one or level two certificate, as defined by the commissioner,

or another certificate approved by commissioner rule and satisfy high school graduation requirements and receive a high school diploma;

(3) require the partnering school district or open-enrollment charter school to permit all district or school students in grade level 11 or 12 to enroll in a course of study provided under Subdivision (2);

(4) be governed by an articulation agreement between the partnering school district or open-enrollment charter school and institution of higher education; and

(5) meet any other requirements established by commissioner rule.

(e) Authorizes the commissioner to approve the substitution of a credit in a subject area required for high school graduation under Section 28.025 (High School Diploma and Certificate; Academic Achievement Record) with a credit in a career and technology education course provided by an institution of higher education under the program that substantially covers the essential knowledge and skills of the course for which it is substituted. Prohibits this subsection from being construed to limit the number of substituted credits a student is authorized to earn while participating in the program.

(f) Prohibits a career and technology education course authorized as a substitute credit under Subsection (e) from counting for more than one credit toward the student's high school graduation requirements or as a credit for more than one subject area.

(g) Provides that time that a student spends participating in the program is counted as part of the minimum number of instructional hours required for a student to be considered a full-time student in average daily attendance for purposes of Section 48.005 (Average Daily Attendance).

(h) Prohibits this section from being construed to prevent a student's participation in career and technology education or dual credit courses before the student begins participating in the program or to authorize the commissioner to require approval by the commissioner for partnerships between school districts or open-enrollment charter schools and institutions of higher education for purposes other than the program, including partnerships to provide dual credit courses.

(i) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to administer the program.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2025–2026 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.