

**SUBJECT:** Providing a vocational education program to eligible high school students

**COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 12 ayes — Dutton, Lozano, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley, Huberty, K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — M. González

**WITNESSES:** For — Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers (TAM); Dr. Larry Wallace Jr., Texas Municipal League-Region 10; Chris Harvey; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shannon Meroney, BASF Corporation; Daniel Womack, Dow, Inc.; John McCord, NFIB; Galt Graydon, Southwest Airlines Co.; J.D. Hale, Texas Association of Builders; Chris Noonan, Texas Chemical Council; Mia McCord, Texas Conservative Coalition; Jennifer Fagan, Texas Construction Association; Adam Burklund, Texas Masonry Council; Starlee Coleman, Texas Public Charter School Association; Chad Cantella)

Against — Robin Painovich, Career and Technical Association of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Chloe Latham Sikes, Intercultural Development Research Association; Grover Campbell, TASB; Dena Donaldson, Texas AFT; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Carrie Griffith, Texas State Teachers Association)

On — Greg Vaughn, Texas Association of Workforce Boards; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin, Jeff Cottrill, Leonardo Lopez, Monica Martinez, and Heather Mauze, Texas Education Agency; Jamey Harrison, UIL)

**BACKGROUND:** Under Education Code ch. 12, subch. C, school district boards of trustees may authorize and oversee campus or campus program charter schools.

Interested parties contend that a campus or campus program charter school with a focused course of study in vocational education could enable interested high school students to gain skills and credentials they need to enter technical professions like plumbing, welding, construction, and electrical work.

**DIGEST:**

CSHB 2554 would establish a process by which a school district could establish a vocational education program to high school students whose educational needs would be better served by focused vocational education and training. A vocational education program granted a charter under the bill's provisions would have to offer students who resided in the district a program that was aligned with industry-recognized credentials and certificates or industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) would have to establish minimum curriculum requirements for a vocational education program, including the successful completion of not more than 24 credits for graduation. At least 10 credits of the minimum curriculum requirements would have to be earned in vocational education courses. A program could require the completion of additional credits that were not included in the minimum curriculum requirements established by SBOE.

The bill would specify certain required credits in the minimum curriculum requirements.

**Partnerships.** CSHB 2554 would authorize school districts to form partnerships with public community, technical, and state colleges in Texas offering academic or technical education or vocational training under a certificate or associate degree program. A district could use state funding to pay tuition costs for students receiving academic or technical education or vocational training from an institution of higher education under a partnership.

A district could partner with private sector businesses to ensure students had sufficient opportunities to participate in apprenticeship training and

workplace-based education.

**Enrollment.** A student who had completed 10th grade in a high school campus in the school district would be eligible to enroll in the district's vocational education program if the student and parent completed a required informed consent form. A school counselor would have to advise the student and parent about the benefits of graduating under the foundation high school program and under a vocational education program, including specific foundation high school program courses that would be replaced by vocational education program courses.

**Assessments.** A school district could adopt and administer exams necessary for a student in the vocational education program to earn an industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate. A student would be entitled to a subsidy for such an exam.

The commissioner of education could not require that a student in the vocational education program be administered a state exam that was not required under federal law.

**Achievement indicators.** The commissioner would have to adopt a set of achievement indicators for students enrolled in a district's vocational education program based on recommendations from the Texas Workforce Investment Council and other requirements specified in the bill. The commissioner would be required to publish an annual report on the performance of vocational education programs based on the achievement indicators.

**Instructor qualifications.** CSHB 2554 would establish minimum qualifications for a person employed by a school district as a vocational education instructor that demonstrated subject matter expertise. An instructor would be required to receive at least 20 hours of classroom management training.

A school district employee who provided services under a vocational education program and qualified for membership in the Teacher

Retirement System would have to be covered to the same extent as another qualified employee.

**Funding.** The bill would limit funding under the career and technology education allotment to the first 10 hours of instructional hours provided to students in a vocational education program. The amount of the entitlement would be proportionately reduced using a method adopted by the commissioner.

**Outcomes bonus.** For purposes of the college, career, or military readiness outcomes bonus, a graduate of a vocational education program would be considered to demonstrate career readiness if the graduate earned an industry-related license, credential, or certificate.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

**NOTES:**

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have a negative impact of about \$37.8 million to general revenue through fiscal 2023.