

- SUBJECT:** Optional career and technology programs and certificates
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Sadler, Dutton, Dunnam, Grusendorf, Hochberg, Lengefeld, Oliveira, Olivo, Smith
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Gabriel Calzada and Michael Moehler, Calhoun County ISD; Stephen Waddell, Tulos-Midway ISD; Kathey Gillispie, Associated Builders and Contractors; Cecil Lara, Texas Career and Technology Educators; Rene Lara, Texas Federation of Teachers; David Barron; Allan Meriwether
- Against — Dianne Hensley, Concerned Women for America
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1418 would amend the Education Code to create a career and technology program and certificate that school districts could implement at their discretion. The certificate program would be in addition to any authority already given to districts to develop career and technology programs. Under the program, a student could receive a career and technology certificate in addition to a diploma or certificate of coursework completion.
- CSHB 1418 would allow a district to contract with another school district, a post-secondary educational institution, a trade or technical school, a local business, or a local workforce development board to assist in the development of the program and provide instruction to students. A program developed in cooperation with a local business or local workforce board would have to provide training in technology fields unique to the area.
- A district could provide insurance to protect a business contracting with the district against liability for bodily injury or death of a student while working for the business as part of the program. The amount of insurance would have to be reasonable considering the district's financial situation, and the insurance would have to be provided by a reliable insurance company doing business in Texas.

Any district providing a career and technology certificate program would have to submit the proposed program to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for approval.

CSHB 1418 also would require the Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness, in conjunction with TEA and the Texas Workforce Commission, to conduct a study to determine the effectiveness of career and technology programs in improving the academic and professional success of students. The study would have to include development of a catalog of career and technology programs that help students make the transition to post-secondary education and high-skill, high-wage jobs. The agencies would have to submit the report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker by December 1, 2000.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. The career and technology program and certificate would apply beginning with the 2000-01 school year.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

High school students could gain an edge in the workforce by being included in a structured career and technology program that allowed them to demonstrate to potential employers the successful completion of a course of study. Students could use these certificates to get jobs or apprenticeships in many fields with significantly growing demand, particularly high-tech fields. CSHB 1418 would encourage partnerships with local companies and workforce boards to tailor programs to the region's workforce needs.

Creating a career and technology program would not take away from the school's primary emphasis on academics but would allow districts to offer students who wished to pursue education in such fields a head start in completing the extensive training needed for many industries. Many of these courses could be used to earn credits at trade or technology schools or at junior colleges, allowing those students to earn a certificate or associate's degree more quickly and enter the workforce.

CSHB 1418 would create a program in addition to authority already granted to districts to develop career and technology programs. Several districts already have implemented similar programs with great success. Allowing those successes to be emulated in other parts of the state would expand the

number of qualified, trained applicants that Texas businesses could choose from to fill their staffing needs.

CSHB 1418 is designed to promote student development in highly rigorous training programs that could lead to successful careers. These programs would not be used as an alternative to academic programs or to allow students to be trained only for menial, low-paying jobs.

The study required by this bill would help the Legislature determine the usefulness of additional career and technology programs.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

Career and technology programs could dilute the academic standards of public schools and distract students from completing their academic course of study. Regardless of the good intentions of policymakers, vocational programs often are used to pigeonhole low-performing students who someone believes might not be able to complete a competitive academic curriculum. If private companies want to train people to work for them, they should train those people themselves and not rely on the public school system to develop programs to feed them new workers.

OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 1418 is unnecessary. Districts already have the authority under the Education Code to develop and implement career and technology programs. If this program were enacted into law, it could limit the options of districts that might want to try a different approach but would be forced to mold their program to fit this legislation, simply because it might be administratively easier to monitor at the state level.

NOTES:

The original version of HB 1418 would allowed students receiving career and technology education with another entity to be counted in the average daily attendance of the district in which the student was regularly enrolled. The original version also would have allowed districts to grant an annual tax credit to a business in exchange for goods or services provided to a career and technology program. The committee substitute would require TEA rather than the State Board of Education to approve the program, would make the career and technology program effective with the 2000-01 school year rather than immediately, and would move the due date of the career and technology report from September 1, 2000 to December 1, 2000.