

- SUBJECT:** Funding for the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Morrison, F. Brown, Chavez, Goolsby, J. Jones, Mercer, Nixon  
0 nays  
2 absent — Giddings, Smithee
- WITNESSES:** For — Tina Ho, Texas Instruments; Rita Johnson; Jay McIntire, Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented; John E. Novak and Phillip Wismer, Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science; Corlisa Ondijo; Adam Michael Smith; Justin Thomas; Whitney Williams  
Against — None  
On — Richard J. Sinclair, University of North Texas
- BACKGROUND:** The 70th Legislature in 1987 established the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science as a division of the University of North Texas to provide an enriched school for gifted and talented high school juniors and seniors to complete their high school education and to attend college courses for credit. One of the academy's goals is to reduce the shortage of mathematics and science professionals in the state.  
  
Under Education Code, sec. 105.301, the academy generally is not subject to statutes or Texas Education Agency rules regulating public schools. However, the academy is entitled to a basic allotment from the Foundation School Program (FSP) as if the academy were a school district, except that the academy's local share offset is equivalent to the local fund assignment of the Denton Independent School District (DISD).
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1363 would eliminate the Tier 1 local share offset in determining state aid for the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science and would specify that the academy would receive allotments from the FSP as if it were a school district without a Tier 1 local share. Each year, the education commissioner

would have to set aside an amount for the academy from funds appropriated for the gifted and talented allotment for public schools. In any academic year in which the academy's FSP allotment exceeded \$366,825, the portion of the allotment above that amount would have to be funded by monies set aside by the commissioner from the gifted and talented student allotment. After deducting the amount for the academy's funding, the commissioner would have to reduce each district's Tier 1 allotment accordingly.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2003, and would apply beginning with the 2003-04 school year.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 1363 would change the funding procedures for the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science (TAMS). Since its inception more than 16 years ago, TAMS has received an allotment from the FSP as if the academy were a school district, except that the academy's local share of funding is tied to the local fund assignment of the DISD. TAMS has no relationship with DISD beyond its allotment formula, other than location.

As local property values increase, the amount of state funding to a school district decreases. Because of increased property values in DISD, the allotment that TAMS receives is decreasing. Unlike local school districts, however, TAMS has no local taxing authority and receives none of the additional property tax revenue that DISD collects as a result of the area's increased property values. This bill would disengage TAMS from the DISD allotment and would entitle TAMS to allotments from the FSP as if it were a school district without a Tier 1 local share.

During its existence, TAMS has become a nationally recognized program. Student accomplishments include awards sponsored by major corporations. For the third year in a row, the school has had more students named Barry M. Goldwater Scholars, a merit scholarship program established by Congress in 1986, than any other Texas college or university — more, in fact, than the California Institute of Technology, Stanford, Yale, or MIT.

TAMS has proven to be a valuable education investment for the state. The state should alter the academy's funding method to preserve its outstanding academic program. This bill would allow the continuation of TAMS in a way that would involve no additional expense to the state.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

Students at TAMS receive free tuition, books, and fees. Their only expense is housing and board. In view of the state's budgetary shortfall, the state should consider a tuition charge for TAMS, especially since the academy's students are receiving dual credit for high school and college courses. Also, the proposed funding mechanism would reduce each school district's gifted and talented student allotment. This could amount to a significant reduction for some larger districts.

**NOTES:**

The committee substitute would change the filed version of HB 1363 by adding the directive for the commissioner to set aside monies from the gifted and talented allotment to provide funding for TAMS.

SB 1762 by Estes, identical to HB 1363 as introduced, has been referred to the Senate Education Committee.