

- SUBJECT:** Funding for joint high school and junior college technology courses
- 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 — Billy Bowman, Santa Gertrudis ISD, Texas Association of Community Schools, and school districts in Region II Service Center area; Richard V. Butler, Alamo Area Aerospace Academy and Information Technology and Security Academy; Paul Colbert, El Paso ISD; Charles M. Cook, Houston Community College System; Rey Garcia, Texas Association of Community Colleges; Daniel P. King, Hidalgo ISD and South Texas Association of Schools; George H. McShan, Texas Association of School Boards and National School Board Association; Janie Neighbors and Vicki Smith, Weatherford College; Edmund R. Oropez, Weslaco ISD; Shirley A. Reed, South Texas Community College; Richard M. Rhodes, El Paso Community College

Against — None

On — Teri Flack, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; Joe Wisnoski, Texas Education Agency
- BACKGROUND:** Under Education Code, sec. 130.008, public junior colleges may enter into agreements with school districts to offer courses for which a high school student can receive joint credit. When state funding is provided to both a school district and a public junior college for a student enrolled in junior college courses, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) must develop jointly a mechanism to identify and eliminate duplication of state funding.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 415 would specify that until September 1, 2004, school districts could not include the time a student spends in joint credit courses as part of their

average daily attendance for school finance purposes. The bill would repeal the requirement that TEA and THECB jointly develop a mechanism to identify and eliminate duplication of state funding for students enrolled in joint junior college-high school credit programs.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2003.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 415 would provide a financial incentive for school districts to encourage students to participate with junior colleges in joint credit programs for career and technology. As directed by current law, TEA and THECB have established a policy allowing community colleges to receive credit for the time a student is in joint credit classes, but school districts cannot count these hours as part of their average daily attendance. Because school districts receive an additional allotment for career and technology courses, they stand to lose a significant amount of funding if they encourage students to enroll in joint technology programs. Consequently, school districts are placing more and more restrictions on participation in these programs, instead of expanding them to prepare students better for the workforce.

CSHB 415 would eliminate this barrier by taking TEA and THECB out of the process and allowing school districts to count students in their average daily attendance figures after September 1, 2004. Because of the way districts are reimbursed, the state would incur no expense during the current biennium.

For a limited period, the bill would create increased costs to the state as more students enrolled in joint programs and school districts were reimbursed accordingly. THECB estimates that dual enrollment would increase by about 5 percent per year for three years, with no further increases. These costs eventually would be offset by the savings that would result when joint-degree students completed junior college programs sooner and entered the workforce to become productive, taxpaying citizens.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 415 would allow duplication of funding for students who attend joint programs, at an estimated cost to the state of an average \$1.5 million per year from 2006 through 2008. Instead of authorizing such duplication, TEA and THECB should continue to explore ways to change the existing arrangement so that school districts and community colleges can be compensated fairly without duplicating funding.

NOTES:

The committee substitute added the provision prohibiting school districts from including the time students spend in joint courses in their average daily attendance until September 1, 2004.

The fiscal note for CSHB 415 estimates no cost to the state in fiscal 2004-05, but a cost to general revenue of \$1.4 million in 2006, \$1.6 million in 2007, and \$1.6 million in 2008.