

- SUBJECT:** Establishing committees to handle advanced placement incentive funds
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Grusendorf, Oliveira, Branch, Dawson, Dutton, Eissler, Griggs, Hochberg
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Madden
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, March 12 — 30-0
- WITNESSES:** For — Lindsay Gustafson, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Julian Shaddix, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 28.053 allows a school participating in the Texas Advanced Placement Incentive Program to be awarded a one-time \$3,000 equipment grant for providing a college advanced placement course or international baccalaureate course, and \$100 for each student who scores a three or better on a college advanced placement test or four or better on an international baccalaureate examination. The money is paid to the school as non-designated funds. Some of these funds are directed as awards to individual teachers participating in this program.
- DIGEST:** SB 578 would require school principals of each school participating in the Texas Advanced Placement Incentive Program to establish a team of no more than five members, containing at least three teachers, to determine the manner in which program funds should be used. The team would be made up of at least one teacher participating in the program and at least one teacher who taught students in preparation for their participation in the program. This team would be required to meet at least annually. SB 578 would not prohibit the use of these funds as awards for individual teachers in the program.

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, 2003.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

AP classes are a valuable tool to help students prepare for college. Since adopting AP program incentives, the state has widened its lead over other states in offering AP courses and in students passing AP tests. To maximize the value of the program incentives, however, it is important to ensure that schools awarded funds for good performance on AP exams use these funds for appropriate purposes, such as purchasing additional equipment or textbooks, rather than for frivolous activities, such as pizza parties for students.

SB 578 would allow the teachers who teach AP courses to be more involved in deciding where the money was spent and would give them more control over ensuring that the money was used to improve their programs. The bill still would allow schools to give awards to high performing teachers as a reward for excellent work.

Part of the job of being a teacher is to participate in committees. It would not be overly burdensome to require teachers to form a committee that met at least annually to determine the use of these funds.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Requiring teachers to form another committee to deal with this issue would add more work to a group that already is overburdened. It would make more sense to allow principals to decide how to use this money or whether this issue could better be addressed in an existing committee.