

SUBJECT: Eligibility for the Early High School Graduation Scholarship program

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Eissler, Zedler, Branch, Dutton, Hochberg, Mowery, Olivo,
Patrick

0 nays

1 absent — Delisi

WITNESSES: For — Ted Melina Raab, Texas Federation of Teachers; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Martin Pena, South Texas Association of Schools and Jeanette Rodriguez, Texas State Teachers Association)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jane Caldwell, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 56.203 outlines the eligibility requirements for the Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program.

Eligibility. A Texas resident who exclusively attended public high school in Texas is eligible if:

- the student graduated in not more than 41 consecutive months and successfully completed the recommended or advanced high school program;
- the student graduated in not more than 45 consecutive months, with at least 30 hours of college credit, successfully completed the recommended or advanced high school program or advanced high school program; or
- the student graduated in not more than 36 consecutive months after successfully completing the requirements for a high school diploma, regardless of whether the persons successfully completed the recommended or advanced high school program.

Entitlement. An eligible person under the program is entitled to a state credit to be applied not only toward tuition but also mandatory fees at a public or private institution, in Texas or out of state.

The requirement for exclusive attendance at a Texas public high school denies certain students – who, because of family migratory work, family military service, or other reasons, had to attend high school in another state – the opportunity to receive a scholarship under this section.

DIGEST: CSHB 209 would amend Education Code, sec. 56.203 to permit a student who attended a Texas public high school for the majority of time and who graduated from a Texas public high school to be considered eligible under the Early High School Graduation program, assuming all other requirements were met.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board would adopt rules to determine whether a person attended public high school in the state for the majority of time the person attended high school.

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, 2007.

NOTES: According to the fiscal note, based on an average per student award of \$1,176 if an additional 120 students received the award under HB 209, the additional cost would be \$141,120 per year in a program that was appropriated \$8.6 million in fiscal 2006-07.