

- SUBJECT:** Weighting dual-credit courses in grade-point-average calculations
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Eissler, Zedler, Delisi, Dutton, Hochberg, Mowery, Patrick  
0 nays  
2 absent — Branch, Olivo
- WITNESSES:** *(on original version:)*  
For —None  
  
Against —Abraham Salem, Canadian ISD, TASB; *(Registered, but did not testify: Kathryn Karam, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF))*  
  
On —Ramiro Canales, Texas Association of School Administrators
- BACKGROUND:** Under Education Code, sec. 25.0252, the commissioner of education may develop a standard method of computing a student’s high school grade point average that provides for additional weight to be given to honors, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or dual-credit courses.  
  
For students entering grade nine during or after the 2007-2008 school year, a school district must use this method to compute the student’s grade point average and determine the student’s eligibility for automatic college admissions under sec. 51.803, the top 10 percent law.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 396 would amend sec. 25.0252 to require school districts to develop standard methods for computing a student’s high school grade point average. The method would have to give weight to dual-credit courses that was equal to the weight given to comparable honors, advanced placement, or international baccalaureate courses. The grade point average calculated by this method would be used to determine class rank in addition to a student’s eligibility for automatic college admissions. The commissioner would adopt rules to implement these changes.

School districts would adopt new methods of calculation as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

The bill also would also repeal the provision that requirements for calculating grade point averages and determining eligibility for automatic college admissions be applied only to students beginning in the ninth grade in the 2007-2008 academic year, and would repeal the September 1, 2010, expiration date.

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.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 396 would make GPA calculations more fair to students who enrolled in dual-credit courses. Dual-credit courses allow high school students to take college courses and receive both high school and college credit upon completion of the course. This allows students to explore the idea of college while defraying future costs in the event the student chooses to enroll in college.

Texas has more than 1,000 school districts and each school is charged with creating its own method for calculating grade point averages and class rank. Based on their community's needs and goals, school districts determine which courses merit additional weight when calculating grade point averages. In some cases, these methods exclude dual-credit courses while giving additional weight to honors, advancement placement, and international baccalaureate courses.

Students may be discouraged from taking advantage of dual-credit courses if the coursework does not reflect the additional weight in their grade point averages. Enrolling in dual-credit courses that do not receive additional weight could affect a student's grade point average negatively and, in turn, the student's class rank and eligibility for automatic college admissions.

Requiring that the extra weight granted to dual-credit classes be the same as that granted to honors, advanced placement and international baccalaureate classes would provide a more impartial assessment of students' efforts and would allow students who enrolled in dual credit courses to remain competitive with their peers in other advanced classes.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

CSHB 396 would infringe on a school district's ability to implement policy that reflected the priorities and goals of its community. Some school districts believe the curricula of their advanced courses can be more rigorous than classes offered at a community college. HB 396 would eliminate a school district's ability to discern when the district's courses comparatively merited more weight.

Because methods of calculating grade point averages vary widely among school districts, some districts are likely to incur a cost for conforming to a new method — for needing to modify software, for example.

NOTES:

The original bill would have required the commissioner to develop a standard method of calculation for grade point averages. The committee substitute would direct school districts to develop the calculation method and specifies that the method give weight to dual-credit courses that is equal to the weight given to comparable honors, advanced placement, or international baccalaureate courses. The substitute also would require that the grade point average calculated by the prescribed method be used to determine class rank. It also would direct the commissioner to adopt rules necessary for implementation.

The substitute also includes the repeal of a subsection that requires GPA calculations to begin in the 9th grade and be used to determine eligibility for automatic college admissions and that establishes a September 1, 2010, expiration date.