

**SUBJECT:** Authorizing workplace visit absences for certain high school students

**COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 12 ayes — Buckley, Allen, Allison, Cunningham, Cody Harris, Harrison, Hefner, Hinojosa, K. King, Longoria, Schaefer, Talarico

0 nays

1 present not voting — Dutton

**WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Aaron Mccloud, Intervene K-12; Annie Spilman, NFIB; Gilbert Turrieta, Texas Association of Builders; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Bryce Adams, Texas Public Charter Schools Association; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Eric Marin, Mike Meyer, Monica Martinez, James Terry, Texas Education Agency)

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that school districts should allow high school students interested in pursuing certain careers to visit relevant workplaces without being penalized with unexcused absences.

**DIGEST:** HB 131 would allow a school district to excuse a high school junior or senior from attending school to visit a professional at the professional's workplace to determine the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field. The district could not excuse such an absence for more than two days during the student's junior or senior year. The district would be required to adopt a policy to determine when such an absence could be excused and a procedure to verify the student's visit at the workplace.

The bill would include such an absence in the list of excused absences for which a student could not be penalized and would be counted as if the student attended school for calculating the average daily attendance of district students. A student would be allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed on the days of the absence.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

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, 2023.