

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R1086 CAS-D

S.B. 151
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Education
4/18/2005
As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

According to *Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2004 Progress Report*, participation in higher education among Hispanics is lagging behind that of other demographic groups. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) estimated that Texas must increase Hispanic college enrollment by an additional 48,041 students to reach the 2005 target for that group. In addition, the percentage of recent high school graduates who enter college is not increasing, suggesting a need to enhance efforts to encourage them to prepare for and succeed in college.

Dual-credit programs, which allow high school juniors and seniors to take college-level courses while earning both college and high school credit, have been successful in encouraging high school students to enroll in college, according to the THECB.

As proposed, S.B. 151 establishes a pilot project to encourage at-risk students to participate in dual-credit programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board of Education in SECTION 3 (Section 31.031, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.2161, as follows:

Sec. 54.2161. PILOT PROJECT FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COURSES FOR CONCURRENT HIGH SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC CREDIT. (a) Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education to waive the tuition and mandatory fees charged by the institution for a student who meets certain requirements, notwithstanding Section 54.216.

(b) Entitles a student described by Subsection (a) to free textbooks required for a course described by Subsection (a) (2) in accordance with Section 31.031 (Textbooks For Students Enrolled In Courses For Concurrent High School And Higher Education Academic Credit Under Pilot Project).

(c) Requires the commissioner of higher education to conduct an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot project in encouraging students to graduate from institutions of higher education in a timely manner and any other benefits or any problems that result from the pilot project. Requires the commissioner of higher education, in making that evaluation, to consult with the commissioner of education (commissioner). Requires the commissioner of higher education to report the results of the evaluation to the legislature, no later than December 31, 2006, and December 31, 2008.

(d) Prohibits the governing board of an institution of higher education from waiving tuition and fees and provides that a student is not entitled to free textbooks for a semester or session before the 2005 fall semester.

(e) Provides that this section expires August 15, 2009.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 31.021, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c), to require the State Board of Education (board) to annually set aside out of the available school fund an amount sufficient for each school district with one or more students entitled to free textbooks, to provide those textbooks for the following school year. Requires the board to determine the amount of the available school fund to set aside for the state textbook fund for purposes of this subsection based on the commissioner's estimate of the amount that will be necessary to provide textbooks. Provides that this subsection expires August 15, 2009.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 31, Education Code, by adding Section 31.031, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 31.031. TEXTBOOKS FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COURSES FOR CONCURRENT HIGH SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC CREDIT UNDER PILOT PROJECT. (a) Requires the school district attended by a student who is entitled to free textbooks to provide each textbook the student requires for a course.

(b) Requires the board to adopt rules for the provision of textbooks. Authorizes the rules to provide for a school district to purchase a textbook for a student or for the student to purchase the textbook with the money set aside and provided to the student by the district. Requires the rules to provide for ensuring that money provided to the student is used only to pay for a textbook required for a course, if the rules allow for the student to purchase the textbook with money provided by the district.

(c) Provides that Section 31.102(c) (Title and Custody) does not apply to a textbook provided under this section, except that the board of trustees of the school district in which a student is enrolled is the legal custodian of a textbook.

(d) Provides that this section expires on August 15, 2009.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 42.005, Education Code, by adding Subsection (g), to require the time a student attends a course to be counted as a part of the minimum number of instructional hours required for a student to be considered a full-time student in average daily attendance, if a student may receive course credit toward the student's high school academic requirements and toward the student's higher education academic requirements for a single course.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 51.3062(r), Education Code, by providing that this section (regarding academic skills) does not apply to a student who is enrolled in a course for which the student is entitled to simultaneously both course credit towards the student's high school academic requirements and course credit toward a degree offered by an institution of higher education. Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 6. (a) Makes application of Section 31.021(c), Education Code, as added by this Act, prospective to the 2005-2006 school year.

(b) Requires the board to adopt rules under Section 31.031, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes the board, for that purpose, to adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for adoption of emergency rules.

(c) Makes application of Section 42.005(g), Education Code, as added by this Act, prospective to the 2005-2006 school year.

(d) Makes application of Section 51.3062(r), Education Code, as amended by this Act, prospective to the 2005 fall semester.

SECTION 7. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.