

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R5304 KJE-D

H.B. 1638
By: Guillen (West)
Administration
5/5/2017
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Since 2006, school districts have been required to provide high school students the opportunity to earn the equivalent of at least 12 semester credit hours of college credit. Statute refers to these programs as college credit programs. These credits may be earned through dual credit, advanced placement, or International Baccalaureate programs. Dual credit programs include academic dual credit, early college high schools, and career and technical education dual credit. These options are offered through partnerships between high schools and community colleges or other institutions of higher education, with the structures of the partnerships varying across programs. Statutory changes in recent biennia have expanded the availability and diversity of dual credit opportunities and the number of dual credits a student may earn.

In September 2015, limitations on the number of dual credits that students may enroll in per semester and grade limitations on when a student may begin dual credit courses were removed. As a result of these changes, the number of dual credit students, the number of credit hours taken, and the state's investment in these programs has grown.

Dual credit fall enrollment grew from more than 42,100 students in 2005 to more than 133,000 students in 2015. By fall 2015, the state was investing approximately \$39.6 million in higher education formula funds for fall enrollment semester credit hours for dual credit courses. In addition, other state funding sources such as public education formula funds may finance dual credit courses. As dual credit programs expand and more high school students earn greater amounts of dual credit, the state would benefit from a comprehensive strategy to administer and evaluate these programs and their outcomes for students.

Amending statute to align goals and requirements among the three programs would increase rigor, consistency, and quality across partnerships and programs. Increasing the evaluation capacity of the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board would enable dual credit programs to be more accountable to the state and provide needed insight into the effectiveness and efficiency of these programs.

This bill requires the Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop and align goals for all dual credit programs to ensure the availability of standard outcomes on which these programs could be evaluated.

The bill also ensures that partnerships are structured to achieve state goals by requiring memoranda of understanding for all dual credit programs to contain program-specific goals and quality assurances. These memoranda should be posted annually on each participating school district's and institution of higher education partner's website.

H.B. 1638 amends current law relating to statewide goals for dual credit programs provided by school districts.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.009, Education Code, by adding Subsections (b-1) and (b-2), as follows:

(b-1) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) jointly to develop statewide goals for dual credit programs, including early college high school programs, career and technical education dual credit programs, and joint high school and college credit programs provided under Section 130.008 (Courses for Joint High School and Junior College Credit), to provide uniform standards for evaluating those programs. Requires that the goals address, at a minimum, certain criteria.

(b-2) Requires that any agreement, including a memorandum of understanding or articulation agreement, between a school district and public institution of higher education to provide a dual credit program described by Subsection (b-1):

(1) include specific program goals aligned with the statewide goals developed under Subsection (b-1);

(2) establish, or provide a procedure for establishing, the course credits that may be earned under the agreement, including by developing a course equivalency crosswalk or other method for equating high school courses with college courses and identifying the number of credits that may be earned for each course completed through the program;

(3) describe the academic supports and, if applicable, guidance that will be provided to students participating in the program;

(4) establish the district's and the institution's respective roles and responsibilities in providing the program and ensuring the quality and instructional rigor of the program;

(5) state the sources of funding for courses offered under the program, including, at a minimum, the sources of funding for tuition, transportation, and any required fees or textbooks for students participating in the program; and

(6) be posted each year on the district's and the institution's respective Internet websites.

SECTION 2. Requires TEA and THECB, not later than August 31, 2018, jointly to develop the statewide goals required under Section 28.009(b-1), Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 28.009(b-2), Education Code, as added by this Act, applies only to an agreement to provide a dual credit program entered into or renewed on or after September 1, 2018.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.