

SUBJECT: Subsidy for certification exam for students learning a trade or occupation

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Eissler, Zedler, Branch, Hochberg, Olivo, Patrick
0 nays
3 absent — Delisi, Dutton, Mowery

WITNESSES: For — Alma Charles, Corpus Christi ISD, Linda Holcombe, Texas Career & Technology Council; Gerald Young, Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; David Duty, Texas Association of School Boards; Terry Green, Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers Association of Texas; Lindsay Gustafson, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Bill Hammond, Texas Association of Business; Elena Lincoln, Association of Texas Professional Educators-ATPE; Martin Pena, South Texas Association of Schools; Ted Melina Raab, Texas Federation of Teachers)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Education Code, sec. 29.183 permits a school district to conduct and supervise career and technology classes and other educational programs for students and spend local maintenance funds for the cost of those classes and programs.

Career and technology programs can provide students with industry certification and expand the number of opportunities for students who do not pursue a traditional four-year college program. Many licensure certificates are accessible to high school students, who can receive training and instruction on a trade and take a certification exam. Trade certificates can be a valued credential and increase the potential for higher salaries.

DIGEST: HB 2383 would amend Education Code, ch. 29 to provide students participating in career and technology programs with a subsidy to pay the cost of an industry certification exam. A student would qualify to receive a subsidy if the student:

- successfully completed a career and technology program of a school district that provided training in a certain trade or occupation;
- successfully passed a certification exam; and
- demonstrated a financial need consistent with the definition of financial need adopted by the College Board and Education Testing service, which determines eligibility for the national free and reduced lunch program.

Upon approval by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the subsidy would be paid to a student in an amount equal to the cost of the certification exam. To obtain a subsidy, a student would:

- pay a fee for the exam; and
- submit a written application demonstrating financial need and the amount paid.

TEA could adopt rules to regulate and manage the subsidy program.

This 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, and would apply beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, HB 2383 would cost \$788,606 in fiscal 2008-09, with \$396, 803 in fiscal 2008 and \$391,803 in fiscal 2009. Because of the wide variation on exam fees, for purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that an exam fee would cost \$100. TEA reports that about 14,000 students earned industry certifications in 2005-2006.