

**SUBJECT:** Career and technical education programs and assistance

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

**VOTE:** 6 ayes — Eissler, Allen, Aycock, Farias, Olivo, Shelton  
0 nays  
5 absent — Hochberg, Dutton, Jackson, Patrick, Weber

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 21— 30-0

**WITNESSES:** For — Robin Painovich, Career and Technology Association of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jay Arnold, Texas PTA; Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Andrew Erben, Texas Institute for Education Reform, Texas Association of Business; Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Rebecca Flores, Houston ISD; Lindsay Gustafson, TCTA; Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Joseph McMahan, Texas Restaurant Association; Julie Shields, Texas Association of School Boards; Amanda Thomas, Texas Charter Schools Association)  
  
Against — None  
  
On — Ted Melina Raab, Texas AFT

**DIGEST:** SB 1313 would establish a grant program to fund career and technology course and program development and to provide scholarships. The bill would amend the funding mechanism by which districts and students are reimbursed for fees associated with trade certification examinations.  
  
The bill would require SBOE to develop a website to provide information about postsecondary educational and employment opportunities, collect data to assess the economic impact of secondary and postsecondary training and education, and conduct ongoing evaluations of programs developed to determine the effectiveness of the programs in meeting the goals of the state’s master plan for higher education.

**Best practices clearinghouse.** SB 1313 would permit open-enrollment charter schools, academically-acceptable campuses, and districts demonstrating significant improvement in student achievement to submit best practices to the state's clearinghouse. The bill would allow, but no longer require, TEA to contract with a third party to maintain the state's clearinghouse.

The bill would require the collection of best practices pertaining to career and technology education. By January 1, 2011, TEA would report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House, and relevant standing legislative committees its recommendations regarding how to use the clearinghouse as a dynamic technical assistance and support tool.

**Essential knowledge and skills.** The bill would require SBOE to revise the essential knowledge and skills of any corresponding career and technology education curriculum each time the THECB revised its official statewide inventory of workforce education courses.

**High demand occupations list.** The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) would develop a list of current or emerging high-demand, high-wage, high-skill occupations in Texas that require licensure, certification, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree. TWIC would approve the list and submit it to the commissioner of education who, with input from the commissioner of higher education, would give final approval. The list would be reviewed and approved every four years.

**Examination cost reimbursement.** Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, TEA would reimburse each school district a district or student for a certification examination cost for current or emerging high-demand, high-wage, high-skill occupations or for students enrolled in a special education program. The student would submit an application to the district, and the district would then submit an application to the TEA.

**Funding to districts.** Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, each school district would receive \$50 per student enrolled in at least two advanced career and technology education classes that would earn the student at least three course credits, or for a student in a tech-prep program advanced course.

**Undergraduate tuition rebates.** Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, students enrolled in dual credit courses would be eligible for undergraduate tuition rebates. The bill would apply regardless of the date a student entered a general academic teaching institution as a freshman.

**Information provided by counselors.** Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, a counselor at an elementary, middle, or charter school would be required to advise students and their guardians regarding:

- the importance of higher education;
- courses designed for postsecondary preparation;
- dual-credit course and industry certification opportunities;
- financial aid availability and requirements;
- career options and projected future demand for specific careers;
- education, certification, and training needed for certain careers;
- current or emerging high-demand, wage, and skill occupations;
- aptitude or interest assessments; and
- the advantages of completing the recommended or advanced high school program.

The information would be provided in a manner that assisted a student in establishing a personal graduation plan that led to a post-secondary licensure, certification, or degree.

**Education resource centers.** The bill would establish education resource centers to generate interest in higher education. Each center would provide resources helpful in preparing for attendance at and admission to institutions of higher education. Centers would provide assistance preparing financial aid forms, and would provide information about career and technical education, including career options; certification, licensing, and degree requirements; and available courses.

**Mobile career centers.** The bill would establish mobile career centers that would visit schools or other places to provide students information on various occupations. The mobile career centers would be operated, to the extent practicable, in coordination with other governmental mobile programs and could be funded only with private gifts, grants, or donations.

**Adult basic education pilot program.** SBOE would establish a pilot program under which participating junior college districts and public technical institutes would receive funds to establish adult education

programs that focused on developmental education to support the transition from high school to college or a career and dropout recovery.

**Jobs and Education for Texans grant program (JET).** The comptroller would establish and administer the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) fund as a dedicated account in the general revenue fund. The fund would be composed of legislative appropriations, interest earned on the investment of money in the fund, and any donations made to the fund.

Grants would be awarded:

- to expand and support programs that prepared low-income students for careers in high-demand occupations;
- to defray the startup costs associated with the development of new career and technical education programs; and
- to provide scholarships for students in career and technical education programs.

*Advisory Board.* An advisory board would be created to assist the comptroller. The board would be composed of seven members serving two-year terms. The comptroller would serve as the chairperson. The governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House, THECB, TWC, and the comptroller each would appoint a person to the board. The board would be required to meet at least once each quarter to review applications and grant recommendations. When awarding grants, the potential economic returns to the state from the development of the career and technical education course or program would be considered primarily.

*Nonprofit organizations.* To be eligible, a nonprofit organization would have to provide matching funds and:

- assist low-income students in preparing for, applying to, and enrolling in a public junior college or technical institute;
- be governed by a board of business and community leaders;
- demonstrate above-average persistence and completion rates among participating students; and
- demonstrate that participating students became employed at a starting wage equal to or greater than the prevailing wage for their occupation.

*Public junior colleges and technical institutes.* To be eligible, a public junior college or technical institute would provide matching funds, and grants could be used only:

- to support courses or programs that prepared students for career in high-demand occupations;
- to finance initial costs course or program development; or
- to finance a career and technical education course or program that led to a license, certificate, or postsecondary degree.

*Scholarships.* The comptroller could award a scholarship, based on need, to a public junior college or technical institute student enrolled in a training program for a high-demand occupation.

The bill would grant rulemaking authority to the SBOE, THECB, TEA, the comptroller, and TWC. The bill would not make an appropriation, and would take effect only if an appropriation was made in the general appropriations act.

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, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 1313 would increase the quality of career and technical education (CTE) courses. Although Texas has a high participation in CTE, the quality of those offerings varies widely across the state. The state lacks a systemic approach to encouraging quality CTE statewide. With large numbers of the skilled workforce likely to retire in the near future, the Texas economy soon will be facing a severe shortage of human capital. While all students need a common core of essential knowledge and skills, different students find alternative delivery methods and subject matter both relevant and rewarding. Quality CTE improves attendance rates, lowers dropout rates, increases graduate rates, and improves scores on standardized tests. It also prepares students for future workforce opportunities.

High school students who do not intend to attend an institution of higher education need better opportunities to prepare for the workforce. Too often our culture pushes students toward earning a four-year degree, even if the student does not desire a career that requires a four-year degree. Many of the state's rapidly growing employment fields are in technical fields.

Texas is not training enough students to keep up with the growing demand. If Texas continues to fall short, industries will look to other states for their needs. According to a 2008 comptroller's report, there is a serious imbalance between the demand for skilled workers and the state's ability to supply a labor pool. The report found that there are many high-paying, rapidly growing professions available to individuals with technical training, evidenced by the report's finding that more than 80 percent of all Texas jobs in 2007 did not require a bachelor's degree and, for 44 percent of these jobs, provided above-average income for the state.

**Exam cost reimbursement and undergraduate tuition rebates.** In fiscal 2007, 25,000 students earned industry certification by examination, and approximately 52 percent of students enrolled in CTE programs are identified as economically disadvantaged. The subsidies provided through the examination cost reimbursement, undergraduate tuition rebates, and JET scholarships in the bill would increase the number of economically disadvantaged students able to obtain proper certification and education by taking away the financial roadblock that many students face.

**Jobs and Education for Texans grant program (JET).** JET would be a great opportunity to recover high school dropouts and for those needing developmental education to get into the higher education pipeline. Community colleges are ideal to help persons reach their goal of attending an institution of higher education. The program would address the growing underinvestment in the Texas workforce for jobs that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year degree.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

SB 1313 would increase the workload on school counselors, who are already overwhelmed by the duties assigned to them. Providing counselors the necessary training to implement the planning and information required could cost school districts.

If the state is serious about improving CTE programs and increasing the education level of every individual, the state should fund adequately the programs it creates. Unless an appropriation is made for the programs established through SB 1313, many would not be implemented, while others would overburden agencies both financially and in workload.

**Jobs and Education for Texans grant program (JET).** This bill should ensure that all potential service providers could access the program and that incumbent providers were not favored.

NOTES:                   The fiscal note indicates that an appropriation of approximately \$63 million would be required to implement the provisions of SB 1313.