

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1557
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1557 is intended to encourage private sector participation in early college high schools. Early college high schools partner with colleges in order to allow students least likely to attend institutions of higher learning an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and 60 college credit hours. Under current law, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is permitted to accept gifts, grants, and donations to pay for costs not covered by students' Foundation School Program benefits. To date, no such donations have been made.

S.B. 1557 amends Section 29.908 (Early College Education Program) of the Texas Education Code to provide that private and nonprofit organizations that donate to early college high schools are entitled to an Employers for Education Excellence Award.

The bill further requires that TEA, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) develop and implement a strategic plan to incentivize increased private industry participation in early college high schools. The plan must include ways to incentivize businesses and nonprofits to choose to make contributions to early college high schools and to work with early college high schools to maximize job placement opportunities for their graduates. TWC and THECB must present their strategic plan and make it available on each agency's website.

As proposed, S.B. 1557 amends current law relating to business participation in supporting early college high schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 29.908, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 29.908, Education Code, as follows:

(c) Entitles a student participating in the early college education program (ECE program) to the benefits of the Foundation School Program (FSP) in proportion to the amount of time spent by the student on high school courses, in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner of education (commissioner), while completing the course of study established by the applicable articulation agreement under Subsection (b)(3) (relating to requiring the ECE program to include articulation agreements with colleges, universities, and technical schools in this state to provide a participating student access to postsecondary educational and training opportunities at a college, university, or technical school). Deletes existing text authorizing the commissioner to accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source, including private and nonprofit organizations, to pay any costs of the ECE program not covered by the student's FSP benefits.

(d) Authorizes the commissioner to accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source, including private and nonprofit organizations. Requires that private and nonprofit

organizations that contribute to the foundation school fund receive an award under Section 7.113 (Employers for Education Excellence Award), Education Code.

(e) Requires the commissioner to collaborate with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop and implement a strategic plan. Requires that the plan include:

(1) strategies to increase private industry participation; and

(2) incentives for businesses and nonprofits that choose to make donations and work with early college high schools to maximize job placement opportunities for ECE program graduates.

(f) Requires the strategic plan to, not later than December 1, 2014, be reported to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the governor and made available on each agency's website.

(g) Authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to administer the ECE program. Authorizes the rules to provide for giving preference in receiving ECE program benefits to a student who is in the first generation of the student's family to attend college and to establish other distinctions or criteria based on student need. Requires the commissioner to consult THECB in administering the ECE program. Authorizes THECB to adopt rules as necessary to exercise its powers and duties under this section. Authorizes the P-16 Council to make recommendations, including recommendations for rules, concerning administration of the ECE program.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2013.