

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 22
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) model is based upon an early college high school model, but was developed to create a direct pathway for students from high school to college to the workplace. The model was built upon a partnership between school districts/charters, higher education institutions, and business/industry, with P-TECH students receiving focused education and skills that will prepare them for high-demand jobs.

Key components of the P-TECH model include:

- Partnership between school district, higher education institution, and industry: All making long-term commitments to the success of the school and its students.
- High school, higher education, and business commit to providing: an integrated scope and sequence of high school and college courses; an industry-recognized, postsecondary degree for all students; and hands-on business experience. By utilizing a six-year model, students are provided the time and seamless supports necessary to earn a postsecondary degree in addition to their high school diploma.
- Workplace-learning strand, including mentoring, worksite visits, speakers, project days, skills-based and paid internships, as well as "first-in-line" interview guarantee for available jobs.

As proposed, S.B. 22 amends current law relating to the establishment of a Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program and to the repeal of the tech-prep program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education (commissioner) and in SECTION 1 (Sections 29.553, 29.556, and 29.557, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 29.557, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority previously granted to a governing board of a regional tech-prep consortium is rescinded in SECTION 5 (Section 61.853, Subchapter T, Chapter 61, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Subchapter N, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER N. PATHWAYS IN TECHNOLOGY EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL (P-TECH) PROGRAM

Sec. 29.551. DEFINITIONS. Defines "advisory council," "articulation agreement," "institution of higher education," and "P-TECH program."

Sec. 29.552. P-TECH ADVISORY COUNCIL. (a) Sets forth certain membership and appointment criteria for the P-TECH advisory council (advisory council).

(b) Provides that a member of the advisory council serves at the will of the member's appointing authority.

(c) Requires the advisory council to provide recommendations to the commissioner of education (commissioner) regarding the establishment and administration of the P-TECH program and the criteria for a campus's designation as a P-TECH school under Section 29.556, as added by this Act.

(d) Prohibits a member of the advisory council from receiving compensation for service on the council but provides that, subject to the availability of funding, a member is authorized to receive reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in performing council duties. Authorizes the council to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations to pay for those expenses.

(e) Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code, does not apply to the advisory council.

Sec. 29.553. P-TECH PROGRAM. (a) Requires the commissioner to establish and administer a P-TECH program for students who wish to participate in a work-based education program.

(b) Sets forth certain requirements for the P-TECH program.

(c) Requires each articulation agreement to address certain educational standards.

(d) Requires each memorandum of understanding to include an agreement that the regional industry or business partner will give to a student who receives work-based training or education from the partner under the P-TECH program first priority in interviewing for any jobs for which the student is qualified that are available on the student's completion of the program.

(e) Provides that a student participating in the P-TECH program is entitled to the benefits of the Foundation School Program in proportion to the amount of time spent by the student on high school courses, in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner, while completing the course of study established by the applicable articulation agreement or memorandum of understanding.

(f) Authorizes the commissioner to accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source, including private and nonprofit organizations, for the P-TECH program. Authorizes a private or nonprofit organization that contributes to the program to receive an award under Section 7.113 (Employers For Education Excellence Award).

(g) Requires the commissioner to collaborate with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop and implement a plan for the P-TECH program that addresses regional workforce needs, credit transfer policies between institutions of higher education, and certain work-based education programs.

Sec. 29.554. HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN, LIABILITY, AND AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE COVERAGE. (a) Authorizes the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school to obtain health benefit plan, liability, or automobile insurance coverage to protect a business or entity that partners with the district or school to provide students with work-based training and education under the P-TECH program and to protect a student enrolled in the district or at the school who participates in the district's or school's P-TECH program.

(b) Requires that the coverage be obtained from a reliable insurer authorized to engage in business in Texas or provided through a self-funded risk pool.

(c) Requires the amount of coverage the school district or open-enrollment charter school obtains to be reasonable considering the financial condition of the district or school. Prohibits the amount of coverage from exceeding the amount that is reasonably necessary in the opinion of the board of trustees or governing body.

(d) Requires the board or the governing body to notify the parent or guardian of each student participating in the P-TECH program, if the board or governing body obtains coverage.

(e) Prohibits the failure of any board or governing body to obtain coverage from being construed as placing any legal liability on the district or school or the district's or school's officer, agents, or employees for any injury that results.

Sec. 29.555. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY. Provides that a student who participates in the P-TECH program while enrolled in a school district or open-enrollment charter school is entitled to immunity in the same manner as a professional employee of a school district under Subchapter B (Civil Immunity), Chapter 22, or as an employee of an open-enrollment charter school under Section 12.1056 (Immunity From Liability and Suit).

Sec. 29.556. P-TECH SCHOOL DESIGNATION AND GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Authorizes a school district or open-enrollment charter school that implements or seeks to implement the P-TECH program at a campus to apply to the commissioner for designation of the campus as a P-TECH school in accordance with procedures established by the commissioner.

(b) Requires the commissioner by rule to establish a grant program, from funds appropriated for that purpose, to assist school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in implementing the P-TECH program at the campus designated as a P-TECH school. Authorizes the commissioner to use not more than three percent of the funds appropriated for the grant program to cover the cost of administering the grant program and to provide technical assistance and support to P-TECH schools.

(c) Requires the commissioner to establish the criteria for a campus's designation as a P-TECH school and for participation in the grant program. Requires that the criteria require a school district or open-enrollment charter school to take certain actions.

Sec. 29.557. RULES. (a) Requires the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary to administer the P-TECH program, including rules to ensure a student participating in the program is not considered for accountability purposes to have dropped out of high school or failed to complete the curriculum requirements for graduation until after the sixth anniversary of the date of the student's first day in high school. Authorizes the rules to provide for giving preference in receiving 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.

(b) Requires the commissioner to consult THECB in administering the program. Authorizes THECB to adopt rules as necessary to exercise its powers and duties.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 28.009(d)(2), Education Code, to redefine "sequence of courses."

SECTION 3. Amends Section 39.301(c), Education Code, to require indicators for reporting purposes to include, among certain other indicators, the results of the SAT, ACT, and certified workforce training programs described by Chapter 311 (Voluntary Workforce Training For Certain Students), Labor Code, rather than include the results of the SAT, ACT, articulated

postsecondary degree programs described by Section 61.852 (Tech-Prep Program), and certified workforce training programs described by Chapter 311, Labor Code.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 42.154(a), Education Code, to provide that a district is entitled to \$50 for certain full-time equivalent students if the student is enrolled in two or more advanced career and technology education classes for a total of three or more credits, rather than if the student is enrolled in two or more advanced career and technology education classes for a total of three or more credits or is enrolled in an advanced course as part of a tech-prep program under Subchapter T (Tech-Prep Education), Chapter 61.

SECTION 5. Repealer: Section 29.185(b) (requiring the Texas Education Agency to establish certain procedures for each district and charter school), Education Code.

Repealer: Subchapter T (Tech-Prep Education), Chapter 61, Education Code.

SECTION 6. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.

SECTION 7. Effective date: September 1, 2017.