



HB 1469

Strengthening Career and Technical Education in High Schools

by Erin Valdez

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HB 1469 Benefits

- Levels the playing field for school districts and open-enrollment charters to apply for Skills Development Fund (SDF) grants for career and technical education (CTE) programs. Currently, eligible entities for CTE grants are community colleges, technical colleges, and the Texas A&M Engineering Extension.
- Provides school districts and open-enrollment charters with the option to use a portion of their current CTE allotment to contract with employers to reimburse them for paid internships or apprenticeships.

Benefits of Career and Technical Education

- CTE improves academic performance and helps close the workforce gap.
- In 2016, the [graduation rate of students](#) who took two or more CTE courses was 95.6 percent compared with 89.1 percent for all Texas high school students.
- The [dropout rate for students](#) participating in CTE programs was half that of all Texas students.
- In 2015, [56 percent of all job openings in Texas were middle-skill level](#), but only 42 percent of Texas workers were trained at the middle-skill level.
- Gaining postsecondary technical credentials for middle-skill occupations can substantially [increase average annual wages](#).

HB 1469 Key Points

- Amends the Texas Labor Code [§303.001-303.006](#), which currently apply to public community and technical colleges and the Texas A&M University Engineering Extension, to include school districts and open-enrollment charters as eligible for SDF funds for workforce development training programs.
- Reduces administrative burdens for developing timely workforce training programs.

- Allows for recovery of costs for training in high-demand occupations from state funds.
- Includes school districts and open-enrollment charters as entities eligible for SDF start-up or emergency funds for training programs for businesses. This would allow the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to establish and develop additional programs using the SDF in which school districts or open-enrollment charters with more than 35 percent of students enrolled in CTE programs could participate. The programs will be customized workforce training opportunities designed to meet regional emerging workforce needs as identified by the TWC. Schools do not have to partner with one or more specific employer or institution of higher education to participate in the programs.
- Requires a review by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to assess customized training programs for effectiveness and empowers the Texas Education Agency to assist THECB in reviewing high school programs.
- Amends the Texas Education Code (TEC) by adding Sec. 29.1871 to permit school districts to contract with private employers to reimburse the employer for all or part of the cost of providing a paid internship or similar program to a student participating in a career and technology education program for the district.
- Requires that these contracts include provisions under which “the school district is granted sufficient control to ensure that the public purpose ... is accomplished and the district receives the return benefit.”
- Amends TEC §42.154 to allow school districts to use funds allocated to the district for CTE as provided under Sec. 29.1871 (weighted funding).

For more information, please see TPPF Policy Brief [Closing the Middle-Skill Gap: High School Internships](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Erin Davis Valdez is a policy analyst at the Center for Innovation in Education at Texas Public Policy Foundation and for Right on Work, an initiative of the Foundation. Before joining the Foundation, Erin was a program manager at the Charles Koch Foundation, where she served on the Educational Partnerships team.

She has been passionate about the transformational power of education all her life, having received the gift of being homeschooled. She taught for over a decade in Austin-area schools and served as an assistant principal at a charter school in Lewisville. These experiences have given her the opportunity to see first-hand how students can thrive when they have excellent options.

Erin earned a B.A. in classical studies from Hillsdale College and an M.A. in classics at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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