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GUILLEN STREAMLINES DUAL CREDIT PROGRAMS

HB 1638 Creates Statewide Academic Goals, Becomes Law

AUSTIN - Texas State Representative Ryan Guillen's (D-Rural South Texas) HB 1638 will increase the consistency of dual credit programs by mandating the Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to create joint statewide goals for academic dual credit programs and require high schools and postsecondary institutions to align with those goals. HB 1638 was signed by Governor Greg Abbott on **Tuesday, May 23**.

"To better serve Texans and successfully prepare students for higher education, our high schools and postsecondary institutions must have the proper support and consistency that enable them to do so," said Guillen. "Dual credit courses are designed to prepare Texas students for college courses, and therefore they need to provide students with the essential experience and skills required for them to succeed at the college level."

Presently in Texas, early college high school programs and vocational education programs have statutorily established goals and program evaluation measures, while academic dual credit does not. As a result, program accountability is inconsistent.

Texas lacks a comprehensive system to oversee and evaluate dual credit outcomes and has not fully assessed which programs present the most effective models. Furthermore, dual credit enrollment has been increasing in Texas. From 2010 to 2014, dual credit enrollment expanded 25% in the state. Due to the lack of consistency between dual credit programs in the state, and the overall increase in popularity, Rep. Guillen is pleased to ensure the quality of the programs by standardizing the goals they must meet.

National best practices identify rigor, consistency and quality as essential to effective dual credit programs. HB 1638 will create goals to establish course equivalency and credit standards, describe support available to students and lay out each institution's roles and responsibilities to ensure students' success.

"Texas should strive to provide Texas students with the highest quality of education we can muster," said Guillen. "With this legislation we can ensure Texas students experience the rigor and quality of education required to excel in colleges and universities."

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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