

By: Turner of Tarrant

H.B. No. 2031

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of a grant program for regional postsecondary education collaboratives.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter W to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER W. REGIONAL POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

COLLABORATIVES GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 61.931. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Low-income student" means a student who is eligible to receive a grant under the federal Pell Grant program.

(2) "Regional postsecondary education collaborative" means a partnership or other collaboration between stakeholders in education, such as school districts, institutions of higher education, employers, and communities, to improve postsecondary educational outcomes in a region of the state.

Sec. 61.932. GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The board shall establish and administer a competitive grant program under which the board awards grants to eligible regional postsecondary education collaboratives to improve postsecondary educational outcomes for low-income students in the state.

(b) In awarding grants under the program, the board shall give priority to eligible regional postsecondary education

1 collaboratives that:

2 (1) focus on supporting low-income students; or

3 (2) have a demonstrated connection to critical  
4 workforce fields, as determined by the board.

5 Sec. 61.933. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive a grant  
6 under this subchapter, a regional postsecondary education  
7 collaborative must:

8 (1) raise a minimum amount of funding from other  
9 sources for the collaborative's costs, as established by board  
10 rule;

11 (2) provide, at a minimum, a scholarship to students  
12 in an amount that, when combined with other federal or state student  
13 financial assistance for which the student is eligible, covers the  
14 full cost of tuition and required fees for two academic years at a  
15 public junior college;

16 (3) build partnerships committed to changing  
17 postsecondary education systems and improving postsecondary  
18 educational outcomes through the use of data, mutual  
19 accountability, and engagement between a student and the student's  
20 community;

21 (4) measure the collaborative's success by achievement  
22 of increasing postsecondary enrollment and completion at any  
23 institution of higher education and career entry for all students  
24 the collaborative assists;

25 (5) provide personalized outreach to students and  
26 parents;

27 (6) provide proactive, holistic supports to assist

1 students in postsecondary persistence and completion and in  
2 connecting with employers; and

3 (7) satisfy any additional requirements established  
4 by board rule.

5 Sec. 61.934. GRANT AMOUNT. (a) A grant awarded to an  
6 eligible regional postsecondary education collaborative under the  
7 program must be made for two sequential academic years and consists  
8 of:

9 (1) an initial amount at the beginning of each  
10 academic year equal to \$1,000 for each low-income student who:

11 (A) graduated from high school in the preceding  
12 school year; and

13 (B) enrolls at an institution of higher education  
14 for that academic year with the assistance of the collaborative;  
15 and

16 (2) at the end of the academic year for which the  
17 initial amount under Subdivision (1) is awarded, a bonus for each  
18 student described by Subdivision (1) who:

19 (A) persists at an institution of higher  
20 education, as defined by the board, except that the bonus may be  
21 awarded only for the number of those students in excess of the  
22 number of students described by Subdivision (1) who would need to  
23 persist at an institution of higher education for the students'  
24 persistence rate to be equal to the statewide persistence rate of  
25 low-income students at institutions of higher education during the  
26 2018-2019 academic year; or

27 (B) timely completes a certificate or degree

1 program at an institution of higher education, as provided by  
2 Subsection (d), except that the bonus may be awarded only for the  
3 number of those students in excess of the number of students  
4 described by Subdivision (1) who would need to timely complete a  
5 certificate or degree program at an institution of higher education  
6 for the students' timely completion rate to be equal to the  
7 statewide timely completion rate of low-income students at  
8 institutions of higher education during the 2018-2019 academic  
9 year.

10 (b) The bonus per student under Subsection (a)(2)(A) is an  
11 amount equal to \$25 million divided by the total number of students  
12 who qualify for the bonus.

13 (c) The bonus per student under Subsection (a)(2)(B) is an  
14 amount equal to \$20 million divided by the total number of students  
15 who qualify for the bonus.

16 (d) For purposes of this section, "timely completion" means  
17 completion of a certificate or degree program within one and  
18 one-half times the number of calendar years generally required to  
19 complete the program, as determined by the board.

20 Sec. 61.935. GRANT USE. A grant awarded to an eligible  
21 regional postsecondary education collaborative under this  
22 subchapter may be used only for:

- 23 (1) staff support for the collaborative;  
24 (2) student services designed to increase  
25 postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion;  
26 (3) student financial assistance;  
27 (4) programs that provide training for regional jobs

1 in high demand that pay a living wage; and

2 (5) other expenses approved by the board.

3 Sec. 61.936. REPORTING. (a) Each regional postsecondary  
4 education collaborative that receives a grant under this subchapter  
5 shall collect and report to the board information regarding  
6 postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion,  
7 disaggregated by semester or term, as required by the board to  
8 assist the board in fulfilling its duties under this subchapter.

9 (b) Not later than December 1 of each year, the board shall  
10 submit to the legislature a report on the effectiveness of the grant  
11 program established under this subchapter and any recommendations  
12 for legislative or other action.

13 Sec. 61.937. RULES. The board may adopt rules as necessary  
14 to implement this subchapter.

15 Sec. 61.938. FEDERAL FUNDING CONTINGENCY. The board is  
16 required to implement the grant program established under this  
17 subchapter only if federal funding is provided to the board for that  
18 purpose as part of any federal coronavirus disease (COVID-19)  
19 relief spending appropriated on or after January 1, 2021. If such  
20 funding is not provided for that purpose, the board may, but is not  
21 required to, implement the grant program using other money  
22 available to the board for that purpose.

23 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating  
24 Board shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter W, Chapter 61,  
25 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after  
26 the effective date of this Act.

27 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall

1 begin awarding grants under Subchapter [W](#), Chapter [61](#), Education  
2 Code, as added by this Act, for the first academic year for which  
3 federal funding is appropriated for that purpose.

4         SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
5 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
6 provided by Section [39](#), Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
7 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
8 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.