

By: Turner of Tarrant

H.B. No. 2033

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

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

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

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

8 SUBCHAPTER W. REGIONAL POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

9 COLLABORATIVES GRANT PROGRAM

10 Sec. 61.931. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

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

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

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

24 (b) In awarding grants under the program, the board shall

1 give priority to eligible regional postsecondary education
2 collaboratives that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 (5) provide personalized outreach to students and

1 parents;

2 (6) provide proactive, holistic supports to assist
3 students in postsecondary persistence and completion and in
4 connecting with employers; and

5 (7) satisfy any additional requirements established
6 by board rule.

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

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

13 (A) graduated from high school in the preceding
14 school year; and

15 (B) enrolls at an institution of higher education
16 or a private or independent institution of higher education for
17 that academic year with the assistance of the collaborative; and

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

21 (A) persists at an institution of higher
22 education or a private or independent institution of higher
23 education, as determined by board rule, except that the bonus may be
24 awarded only for the number of those students in excess of the
25 number of students described by Subdivision (1) who would need to
26 persist at an institution of higher education or a private or
27 independent institution of higher education for the students'

1 persistence rate to be equal to the statewide persistence rate of
2 low-income students at all institutions of higher education or
3 private or independent institutions of higher education during the
4 2018-2019 academic year; or

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

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

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

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

27 Sec. 61.935. GRANT USE. A grant awarded to an eligible

1 regional postsecondary education collaborative under this
2 subchapter may be used only for:

- 3 (1) staff support for the collaborative;
4 (2) student services designed to increase
5 postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion;
6 (3) student financial assistance;
7 (4) programs that provide training for regional jobs
8 in high demand that pay a living wage; and
9 (5) other expenses approved by the board.

10 Sec. 61.936. REPORTING. (a) Each regional postsecondary
11 education collaborative that receives a grant under this subchapter
12 shall collect and report to the board information regarding
13 postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion,
14 disaggregated by semester or term, as required by the board to
15 assist the board in fulfilling its duties under this subchapter.

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

20 Sec. 61.937. RULES. The board may adopt rules as necessary
21 to implement this subchapter.

22 Sec. 61.938. FEDERAL FUNDING CONTINGENCY. The board is
23 required to implement the grant program established under this
24 subchapter only if federal funding is provided to the board for that
25 purpose as part of any federal coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
26 relief spending appropriated on or after January 1, 2021. If such
27 funding is not provided for that purpose, the board may, but is not

1 required to, implement the grant program using other money
2 available to the board for that purpose.

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

7 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
8 begin awarding grants under Subchapter W, Chapter 61, Education
9 Code, as added by this Act, for the first academic year for which
10 federal funding is appropriated for that purpose.

11 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
12 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
13 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
14 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
15 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.