

By: Zaffirini
(González of El Paso)

S.B. No. 55

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study and report by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board regarding best practices for assisting students with autism spectrum disorder.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.06694 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.06694. STUDY AND REPORT ON ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER. (a) The board, with the assistance of the advisory council on postsecondary education for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities established under Section 61.06641, shall conduct a study to determine best practices for assisting students with autism spectrum disorder who are enrolled at institutions of higher education.

(b) The study must:

(1) identify and track:

(A) the number of students with autism spectrum disorder who graduate from secondary schools in this state;

(B) the number of students with autism spectrum disorder who are enrolled at institutions of higher education;

(C) the student financial assistance available to students with autism spectrum disorder who enroll at institutions of higher education; and

(D) the graduation rates of students with autism

1 spectrum disorder who enroll at institutions of higher education;
2 and

3 (2) identify and examine best practices and program
4 modules from public and private institutions of higher education
5 outside this state that have achieved successful results in working
6 with students with autism spectrum disorder.

7 (c) In conducting the study, the board:

8 (1) shall collaborate with the Texas Education Agency
9 regarding specialized programs offered by elementary or secondary
10 schools for students with autism spectrum disorder to determine how
11 those programs could be replicated at or extended to postsecondary
12 institutions; and

13 (2) may not request, require, or use personally
14 identifiable student information.

15 (d) Not later than December 1, 2025, the board shall submit
16 to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house
17 of representatives, and the commissioner of education a written
18 report that includes the study's findings and any recommendations
19 for legislative or other action.

20 (e) This section expires January 1, 2026.

21 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.