

By: Eckhardt

S.B. No. 597

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the designation of liaison officers to assist certain students at public institutions of higher education who are parents.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.9357 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.9357. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO ARE PARENTS; REPORT. (a) In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) Each institution of higher education shall designate at least one employee of the institution to act as a liaison officer for current or incoming students at the institution who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The liaison officer shall provide to the students information regarding support services and other resources available to the students at the institution, including:

(1) resources to access:

(A) medical and behavioral health coverage and services; and

(B) public benefit programs, including programs

1 related to food security, affordable housing, and housing
2 subsidies;
3 (2) parenting and child care resources;
4 (3) employment assistance;
5 (4) transportation assistance;
6 (5) student academic success strategies; and
7 (6) any other resources developed by the institution
8 to assist the students.

9 (c) Not later than May 1 of each academic year, an
10 institution of higher education shall submit to the coordinating
11 board a report that contains the following information regarding
12 students enrolled at the institution for the current academic year
13 who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of
14 age:

15 (1) the number of those students;
16 (2) demographic data, including age, race, sex,
17 ethnicity, and national origin;
18 (3) academic data, including full-time or part-time
19 enrollment status and graduation, transfer, and withdrawal rates;
20 and
21 (4) other data as prescribed by coordinating board
22 rule.

23 (d) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to administer
24 this section, including rules to ensure compliance with federal law
25 regarding confidentiality of student medical or educational
26 information, including the Health Insurance Portability and
27 Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Section 1320d et seq.), the

1 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C.
2 Section 1232g), and any state law relating to the privacy of student
3 information.

4 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
5 amended by adding Section 61.09081 to read as follows:

6 Sec. 61.09081. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST
7 CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO ARE PARENTS. The board shall designate at
8 least one employee of the board to act as a liaison officer for
9 current or incoming students at institutions of higher education
10 who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of
11 age. The liaison officer shall assist in coordinating college
12 readiness and student success efforts relating to those students.

13 SECTION 3. (a) As soon as practicable after the effective
14 date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
15 shall adopt rules to implement Sections 51.9357 and 61.09081,
16 Education Code, as added by this Act.

17 (b) This Act applies beginning with the 2023-2024 academic
18 year.

19 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
20 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
21 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
22 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
23 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.