

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Leadership Scholars Program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter T-3 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER T-3. TEXAS LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Sec. 61.891. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "program" means the Texas Leadership Scholars Program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 61.892. ESTABLISHMENT; ADMINISTRATION. (a) The Texas Leadership Scholars Program is established to serve as a merit-based scholarship and leadership opportunity program for high-achieving, emerging leaders with financial need.

(b) The board shall administer the program.

(c) Using money appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose, the board shall award scholarships and provide academic achievement support and leadership development to eligible students under the program.

Sec. 61.893. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY. To be initially eligible to participate in the program, a student must:

(1) have graduated from a public high school in this state;

(2) either:

1 (A) have qualified for automatic admission to a
2 general academic teaching institution under Section 51.803; or

3 (B) be nominated by the student's high school for
4 participation in the program and hold another academic distinction
5 recognized by the board;

6 (3) be enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a
7 general academic teaching institution;

8 (4) be economically disadvantaged, as determined by
9 board rule; and

10 (5) comply with any additional requirement adopted by
11 the board.

12 Sec. 61.894. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY. After establishing
13 initial eligibility to participate in the program under Section
14 61.893, a student may continue participating in the program only if
15 the student:

16 (1) is enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a
17 general academic teaching institution;

18 (2) maintains a minimum overall grade point average
19 determined by board rule; and

20 (3) complies with any additional requirement adopted
21 by the board.

22 Sec. 61.895. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP
23 DEVELOPMENT. The board may enter into agreements with general
24 academic teaching institutions or other institutions of higher
25 education to provide students participating in the program with:

26 (1) research-based support to make satisfactory
27 academic progress and graduate on time; and

1 (2) leadership development opportunities, including:

2 (A) program cohort learning communities;

3 (B) mentoring, research, and internship
4 opportunities;

5 (C) networking with state government, business,
6 and civic leaders; and

7 (D) statewide cohort learning institutes or
8 seminars.

9 Sec. 61.896. GRANTS, GIFTS, AND DONATIONS. The board may
10 solicit, accept, and spend grants, gifts, and donations from any
11 public or private source for the purposes of the program.

12 Sec. 61.897. RULES. The board shall adopt rules for the
13 administration of the program, including rules providing for the
14 amount and permissible uses of a scholarship awarded under the
15 program.

16 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
17 shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter T-3, Chapter 61,
18 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after
19 the effective date of this Act.

20 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.