

By: Parker

S.B. No. 2139

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Opportunity High School Diploma pilot program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 130, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter O to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER O. OPPORTUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 130.451. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

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

(2) "General academic teaching institution" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(3) "Pilot program" means the Opportunity High School Diploma pilot program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 130.452. PURPOSE. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide an alternative means by which adult students enrolled in a workforce education program at a public junior college may earn a high school diploma at the college through concurrent enrollment in a competency-based education program that enables students to demonstrate knowledge substantially equivalent to the knowledge required to earn a high school diploma in this state.

Sec. 130.453. ADMINISTRATION. The coordinating board shall administer the pilot program in consultation with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission.

1 Sec. 130.454. APPROVAL OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
2 PROGRAM. (a) A public junior college may submit to the
3 coordinating board an application to participate in the pilot
4 program. The application must propose an alternative
5 competency-based high school diploma program to be offered for
6 concurrent enrollment to adult students without a high school
7 diploma who are enrolled in a workforce education program at the
8 college. The proposed program may include any combination of
9 instruction, curriculum, achievement, internships, or other means
10 by which a student may attain knowledge sufficient to adequately
11 prepare the student for postsecondary education or additional
12 workforce education.

13 (b) The coordinating board may approve not more than five
14 public junior colleges to participate in the pilot program.

15 (c) Subject to Subsection (b), the coordinating board shall
16 review and approve a public junior college's application to
17 participate in the pilot program if the board determines that the
18 college's proposed program described by Subsection (a) will provide
19 instruction and assessments appropriate to ensure that a student
20 who successfully completes the program demonstrates levels of
21 knowledge sufficient to adequately prepare the student for
22 postsecondary education or additional workforce education. The
23 coordinating board may coordinate with the Texas Education Agency
24 as necessary to make a determination under this subsection.

25 (d) A public junior college approved to participate in the
26 pilot program may:

27 (1) enter into an agreement with one or more public

1 junior colleges, general academic teaching institutions, school
2 districts, or nonprofit organizations to offer the program
3 described by Subsection (a); and

4 (2) offer the program described by Subsection (a) at
5 any campus of the college or an entity with which the college has
6 entered into an agreement under Subdivision (1).

7 Sec. 130.455. AWARD OF HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. (a) A public
8 junior college participating in the pilot program may award a high
9 school diploma to a student enrolled in the alternative
10 competency-based high school diploma program offered by the college
11 under the pilot program if the student performs satisfactorily on
12 assessment instruments prescribed by coordinating board rule.

13 (b) A high school diploma awarded under the pilot program is
14 equivalent to a high school diploma awarded under Section 28.025.

15 Sec. 130.456. FUNDING. (a) The coordinating board and the
16 Texas Workforce Commission shall coordinate to jointly identify
17 funding mechanisms, including grants, interagency contracts,
18 financial aid, or subsidies, available to public junior colleges
19 and students to encourage and facilitate participation in the pilot
20 program.

21 (b) A public junior college participating in the pilot
22 program is entitled to receive funding under Section 130.003 for
23 the pilot program in the manner provided by coordinating board
24 rule.

25 Sec. 130.457. REPORT. Not later than December 1, 2026, the
26 coordinating board shall submit to the legislature a report on the
27 effectiveness of the pilot program. The report must include a

1 recommendation regarding whether the pilot program should be
2 continued, expanded, or terminated.

3 Sec. 130.458. RULES. The coordinating board may adopt
4 rules as necessary to implement this subchapter.

5 Sec. 130.459. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires
6 September 1, 2027.

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