

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 1233

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to encourage the earning of industry-recognized credentials at public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.09093 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.09093. INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PILOT PROJECT. (a) In this section:

(1) "Agency" means the Texas Education Agency.

(2) "Commission" means the Texas Workforce Commission.

(3) "High-demand, high-growth industry" means an industry identified by the commission as experiencing high demand and high growth in this state based on current and projected job openings, wage thresholds, and employer demand in the state's labor market.

(4) "Industry-recognized credential" means a credential earned by a student in a high-demand, high-growth industry that leads to quality career opportunities, as determined by the commission in coordination with the board and the agency.

(5) "Initiative" means the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative established under Chapter 2308A, Government Code.

(6) "Quality career opportunity" means employment

1 that:

2 (A) provides a self-sufficient wage that meets or
3 exceeds a threshold established by the initiative for purposes of
4 this section; and

5 (B) aligns with statewide and regional workforce
6 development goals, as determined by the initiative.

7 (7) "Self-sufficient wage" means the self-sufficient
8 wage as determined by the initiative under Section [2308A.012](#),
9 Government Code, for purposes of Chapter 2308A of that code.

10 (b) The board, in coordination with the agency and the
11 commission through the initiative, shall conduct a comprehensive
12 feasibility study on the role of industry-recognized credentials in
13 supporting postsecondary success and positive labor market
14 outcomes in this state.

15 (c) The study conducted under Subsection (b) must:

16 (1) identify and assess:

17 (A) the availability, use, and integration of
18 industry-recognized credentials at institutions of higher
19 education;

20 (B) barriers to incorporating
21 industry-recognized credentials into degree and certificate
22 pathways at institutions of higher education, including
23 transferability among institutions of higher education;

24 (C) opportunities to enable students at
25 institutions of higher education to earn multiple
26 industry-recognized credentials as part of a baccalaureate
27 program;

1 (D) the potential for developing regional and
2 statewide frameworks to support cumulative, transferable
3 credential pathways at institutions of higher education; and

4 (E) the role of industry-recognized credentials
5 in reducing time and cost to credential completion, increasing
6 earning potential, and improving alignment with workforce needs;
7 and

8 (2) include a model framework to:

9 (A) enable the creation of accredited degree and
10 certificate programs at both two- and four-year institutions of
11 higher education that incorporate industry-recognized credentials;

12 (B) support high school students in earning
13 credit toward programs described by Paragraph (A);

14 (C) allow students to earn at least two
15 industry-recognized credentials as part of a baccalaureate degree
16 program at an institution of higher education; and

17 (D) facilitate students earning a baccalaureate
18 degree and at least two industry-recognized credentials not later
19 than four years after completing high school.

20 (d) To support the study conducted under Subsection (b) and
21 using resources available within the institutional collaboration
22 center established under Section 61.0571, the board shall establish
23 and administer a pilot project with at least one two-year
24 institution of higher education and at least one four-year
25 institution of higher education to reduce regulatory burdens and
26 assist institutions of higher education in forming partnerships to
27 encourage:

1 (1) completion of industry-recognized credentials in
2 satisfaction of certain required coursework under degree or
3 certificate programs offered by institutions of higher education;

4 (2) memoranda of understanding between institutions
5 of higher education that offer industry-recognized credentials;

6 (3) the transferability of course credit,
7 particularly with regard to course credit leading to an
8 industry-recognized credential;

9 (4) the development of degree and certificate programs
10 that enable students to earn a degree or certificate by completing
11 parts of the program at different institutions of higher education;
12 or

13 (5) the applicability of grant, scholarship, and other
14 student financial aid money toward costs related to earning
15 industry-recognized credentials.

16 (e) The board, in coordination with the agency and the
17 commission through the initiative, may consult with stakeholders to
18 implement this section, including:

19 (1) school districts;

20 (2) postsecondary educational institutions;

21 (3) accrediting agencies;

22 (4) employers;

23 (5) local workforce development boards; and

24 (6) faculty and curriculum experts.

25 (f) The board, in coordination with the agency and the
26 commission through the initiative, shall submit to the governor,
27 the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of

1 representatives, and the standing committee of each house of the
2 legislature with primary jurisdiction over higher education:

3 (1) a preliminary report on the study conducted under
4 Subsection (b) and the pilot project established under Subsection
5 (d), including the board's findings and any recommendations for
6 legislative or other action, not later than March 1, 2026; and

7 (2) a final report on the study conducted under
8 Subsection (b) and the pilot project established under Subsection
9 (d), including the board's findings and any recommendations for
10 legislative or other action, not later than September 1, 2026.

11 (g) This section expires September 1, 2027.

12 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
13 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
14 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
15 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
16 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.