

By: Bonnen

H.B. No. 1544

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot project to allow select public junior colleges to offer certain baccalaureate degrees.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 130, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 130.0012 to read as follows:

Sec. 130.0012. PILOT PROJECT: BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall establish a pilot project to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of authorizing public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science and applied technology. Participation in the pilot project does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college.

(b) The coordinating board shall operate the pilot project at the following public junior colleges:

(1) Brazosport College;

(2) El Centro College of the Dallas County Community College District;

(3) Midland College;

(4) North Harris Montgomery Community College District; and

(5) South Texas Community College.

(c) A public junior college participating in the pilot project may not offer more than five baccalaureate degree programs

1 under the project at any time. The degree programs are subject to
2 the continuing approval of the coordinating board. In determining
3 what baccalaureate degree programs are to be offered, the junior
4 college and the coordinating board shall consider:

5 (1) the need for the degree programs in the region
6 served by the junior college;

7 (2) how those degree programs would complement the
8 other programs and course offerings of the junior college;

9 (3) whether those degree programs would unnecessarily
10 duplicate the degree programs offered by other institutions of
11 higher education; and

12 (4) the ability of the junior college to support the
13 program and the adequacy of the junior college's facilities,
14 faculty, administration, libraries, and other resources.

15 (d) In its recommendations to the legislature relating to
16 state funding for public junior colleges, the coordinating board
17 shall recommend that a public junior college receive substantially
18 the same state support for junior-level and senior-level courses
19 offered under the pilot project as that provided to a general
20 academic teaching institution for substantially similar courses.
21 In determining the contact hours attributable to students enrolled
22 in a junior-level or senior-level course offered under the pilot
23 project used to determine a public junior college's proportionate
24 share of state appropriations under Section 130.003, the
25 coordinating board shall weigh those contact hours as necessary to
26 provide the junior college the appropriate level of state support
27 to the extent state funds for those courses are included in the

1 appropriations. This subsection does not prohibit the legislature
2 from directly appropriating state funds to support junior-level and
3 senior-level courses offered under the pilot project.

4 (e) Each public junior college participating in the pilot
5 project shall prepare a biennial report on the operation and
6 effectiveness of the junior college's baccalaureate degree
7 programs offered under the project and shall deliver a copy of the
8 report to the coordinating board in the form and at the time
9 determined by the coordinating board.

10 (f) Not later than January 1, 2009, the coordinating board
11 shall prepare a progress report on the pilot project. Not later
12 than January 1, 2011, the coordinating board shall prepare a report
13 on the effectiveness of the pilot project, including any
14 recommendations for legislative action regarding the offering of
15 baccalaureate degree programs by public junior colleges. The
16 coordinating board shall deliver a copy of each report to the
17 governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of
18 representatives, and the chair of the standing committee of each
19 house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over higher
20 education.

21 (g) Unless the authority to continue offering the
22 baccalaureate degree programs is continued by the legislature, a
23 public junior college may not:

24 (1) enroll a new student in a baccalaureate degree
25 program under the pilot project after the 2011 fall semester;

26 (2) offer junior-level or senior-level courses for
27 those degree programs after the 2015 fall semester; or

1 (3) award a baccalaureate degree under the pilot
2 project after the 2015 fall semester.

3 (h) This section expires January 1, 2016.

4 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
5 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
6 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
7 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
8 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.