

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 448

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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AN ACT

relating to the Texas Academy of International Studies at Texas A&M International University.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter F, Chapter 87, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 87.505 to read as follows:

Sec. 87.505. TEXAS ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES.

(a) In this section:

(1) "Academy" means the Texas Academy of International Studies.

(2) "Board" means the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System.

(3) "University" means Texas A&M International University.

(b) The Texas Academy of International Studies is a division of Texas A&M International University and is under the management and control of the board. The academy serves the following purposes:

(1) to provide academically gifted and highly motivated junior and senior high school students with a challenging university-level curriculum that:

(A) allows students to complete high school graduation requirements, including requirements adopted under Section 28.025 for the advanced high school program, while

1 attending for academic credit a public institution of higher
2 education;

3 (B) fosters students' knowledge of real-world
4 international issues and problems and teaches students to apply
5 critical thinking and problem-solving skills to those issues and
6 problems;

7 (C) includes the study of English, foreign
8 languages, social studies, anthropology, and sociology;

9 (D) is presented through an interdisciplinary
10 approach that introduces and develops issues, especially issues
11 related to international concerns, throughout the curriculum; and

12 (E) offers students learning opportunities
13 related to international issues through in-depth research and
14 field-based studies;

15 (2) to provide students with an awareness of
16 international career and professional development opportunities
17 through seminars, workshops, collaboration with postsecondary
18 students from other countries, summer academic international
19 studies internships in foreign countries, and similar methods; and

20 (3) to provide students with social development
21 activities that enrich the academic curriculum and student life,
22 including, as determined appropriate by the academy, University
23 Interscholastic League activities and other extracurricular
24 activities generally offered by public high schools.

25 (c) The academy is a residential, coeducational institution
26 for selected Texas high school students with an interest and the
27 potential to excel in international studies. The academy shall

1 admit only high school juniors and seniors, except that the academy
2 may admit a student with exceptional abilities who is not yet a high
3 school junior. The board shall set aside adequate space on the
4 university campus in Laredo to operate the academy and implement
5 the purposes of this section. The academy must operate on the same
6 fall and spring semester basis as the university. Full-time
7 students of the academy must enroll for both the fall and spring
8 semesters. Faculty members of the university shall teach all
9 academic classes at the academy. A student of the academy may
10 attend a college course offered by the university and receive
11 college credit for that course.

12 (d) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the
13 university administration has the same powers and duties with
14 respect to the academy that the administration has with respect to
15 the university. The board shall consult with the dean of the
16 College of Education and other members of the administration as the
17 board considers necessary concerning the academy's administrative
18 design and support, personnel and student issues, and faculty
19 development. The board shall consult with the dean of the College
20 of Arts and Sciences and other members of the administration as the
21 board considers necessary concerning the academy's curriculum
22 development, program design, and general faculty issues. The
23 board, in consultation with university administration, shall:

24 (1) establish an internal management system for the
25 academy and appoint an academy principal who serves at the will of
26 the board and reports to the university provost;

27 (2) provide for one or more academy counselors;

1 (3) establish for the academy a site-based
2 decision-making process similar to the process required by
3 Subchapter F, Chapter 11, that provides for the participation of
4 academy faculty, parents of academy students, and other members of
5 the community; and

6 (4) establish an admissions process for the academy.

7 (e) The student-teacher ratio in all regular academic
8 classes at the academy may not exceed 30 students for each classroom
9 teacher, except that the student-teacher ratio may exceed that
10 limit:

11 (1) in a program provided for the purposes prescribed
12 by Subsection (b)(2) or another special enrichment course or in a
13 physical education course; or

14 (2) if the board determines that a class with a higher
15 student-teacher ratio would contribute to the educational
16 development of the students in the class.

17 (f) The academy shall provide the university-level
18 curriculum in a manner that is appropriate for the social,
19 psychological, emotional, and physical development of high school
20 juniors and seniors. The administrative and counseling personnel
21 of the academy shall provide continuous support to and supervision
22 of students.

23 (g) For each student enrolled in the academy, the academy is
24 entitled to allotments from the foundation school fund under
25 Chapter 42 as if the academy were a school district without a tier
26 one local share for purposes of Section 42.253. If in any academic
27 year the amount of the allotments under this subsection exceeds the

1 amount of state funds paid to the academy in the first fiscal year
2 of the academy's operation, the commissioner of education shall set
3 aside from the total amount of funds to which school districts are
4 entitled under Section 42.253(c) an amount equal to the excess
5 amount and shall distribute that amount to the academy. After
6 deducting the amount set aside and paid to the academy by the
7 commissioner of education under this subsection, the commissioner
8 of education shall reduce the amount to which each district is
9 entitled under Section 42.253(c) in the manner described by Section
10 42.253(h). A determination of the commissioner of education under
11 this subsection is final and may not be appealed.

12 (h) The board may use any available money, enter into
13 contracts, and accept grants, including matching grants, federal
14 grants, and grants from a corporation or other private contributor,
15 in establishing and operating the academy. Money spent by the
16 academy must further the purposes of the academy prescribed by
17 Subsection (b).

18 (i) The liability of the state under Chapters 101 and 104,
19 Civil Practice and Remedies Code, is limited for the academy and
20 employees assigned to the academy and acting on behalf of the
21 academy to the same extent that the liability of a school district
22 and an employee of the school district is limited under Sections
23 22.0511, 22.0512, and 22.052 of this code and Section 101.051,
24 Civil Practice and Remedies Code. An employee assigned to the
25 academy is entitled to representation by the attorney general in a
26 civil suit based on an action or omission of the employee in the
27 course of the employee's employment, limits on liability, and

1 indemnity under Chapters 104 and 108, Civil Practice and Remedies
2 Code.

3 (j) Except as otherwise provided by this section, the
4 academy is not subject to the provisions of this code, or to the
5 rules of the Texas Education Agency, regulating public schools.

6 (k) A student may not begin attending the academy before the
7 2007 fall semester. This subsection expires August 31, 2008.

8 SECTION 2. Subsection (a), Section 25.086, Education Code,
9 is amended to read as follows:

10 (a) A child is exempt from the requirements of compulsory
11 school attendance if the child:

12 (1) attends a private or parochial school that
13 includes in its course a study of good citizenship;

14 (2) is eligible to participate in a school district's
15 special education program under Section 29.003 and cannot be
16 appropriately served by the resident district;

17 (3) has a physical or mental condition of a temporary
18 and remediable nature that makes the child's attendance infeasible
19 and holds a certificate from a qualified physician specifying the
20 temporary condition, indicating the treatment prescribed to remedy
21 the temporary condition, and covering the anticipated period of the
22 child's absence from school for the purpose of receiving and
23 recuperating from that remedial treatment;

24 (4) is expelled in accordance with the requirements of
25 law in a school district that does not participate in a mandatory
26 juvenile justice alternative education program under Section
27 37.011;

1 (5) is at least 17 years of age and:

2 (A) is attending a course of instruction to
3 prepare for the high school equivalency examination, and:

4 (i) has the permission of the child's parent
5 or guardian to attend the course;

6 (ii) is required by court order to attend
7 the course;

8 (iii) has established a residence separate
9 and apart from the child's parent, guardian, or other person having
10 lawful control of the child; or

11 (iv) is homeless as defined by 42 U.S.C.
12 Section 11302; or

13 (B) has received a high school diploma or high
14 school equivalency certificate;

15 (6) is at least 16 years of age and is attending a
16 course of instruction to prepare for the high school equivalency
17 examination, if:

18 (A) the child is recommended to take the course
19 of instruction by a public agency that has supervision or custody of
20 the child under a court order; or

21 (B) the child is enrolled in a Job Corps training
22 program under [~~the Job Training Partnership Act (~~29 U.S.C. Section
23 2881 [~~1501~~] et seq. [~~), and its subsequent amendments~~];

24 (7) is enrolled in the Texas Academy of Mathematics
25 and Science;

26 (8) is enrolled in the Texas Academy of Leadership in
27 the Humanities; [~~or~~]

1 (9) is enrolled in the Texas Academy of International
2 Studies; or

3 (10) is specifically exempted under another law.

4 SECTION 3. Section 28.024, Education Code, is amended to
5 read as follows:

6 Sec. 28.024. CREDIT FOR ENROLLMENT IN CERTAIN ACADEMIES. A
7 school district shall grant to a student credit toward the academic
8 course requirements for high school graduation, up to a maximum of
9 two years of credit, for courses the student successfully completes
10 at:

11 (1) the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities
12 under Section 96.707 [~~Subchapter E, Chapter 108~~]; [~~or~~]

13 (2) the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science under
14 Subchapter G [~~H~~], Chapter 105; or

15 (3) the Texas Academy of International Studies under
16 Section 87.505.

17 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
18 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
19 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
20 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
21 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.