

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R5267 CAS-D

S.B. 1242
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S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, no state program exists that provides tuition exemption credit for students that participate in a school district's tutoring and mentoring program. Two of the state's priorities for education are to provide educational assistance to low-performing students and to increase access to higher education for all students.

As proposed, S.B. 1242 establishes a student tutor program to authorize high school students to earn a tuition exemption credit by participating in a school district's tutoring and mentoring program. This bill provides that, under this program, high school students who volunteer to tutor low-performing students for three hours a week in a district-sponsored and supervised facility earn, for each semester of participation, three hours of tuition exemption credit for an institution of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 2 (Section 54.225, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 29, Education Code, by adding Section 29.917, as follows:

Sec. 29.917. STUDENT TUTOR PROGRAM; TUITION EXEMPTION. (a) Defines "student tutor program."

(b) Authorizes a school district to establish a student tutor program (program) in which a district student in grade nine or above may tutor another student from the same district who is determined, using criteria established under Subsection (h)(4), to be in need of academic assistance. Requires a program to comply with agency guidelines adopted under Subsection (g)(1).

(c) Authorizes any student in grade nine or above, other than a student determined to be in need of academic assistance for any subject area, to volunteer, during one or more semesters of high school enrollment and subject to compliance with a standard of behavior adopted under Subsection (h)(6), to serve as a tutor in a program established by the school district in which the student attends school.

(d) Requires a student, based on criteria adopted under Subsection (g)(2)(A), to successfully complete the training program adopted by the agency under Subsection (g)(2)(A) before serving as a tutor under this section. Requires the school district in which the student attends school to determine whether the student has successfully completed the training program.

(e) Requires tutoring under this section to be provided in a school district facility. Requires a school district employee to supervise the program, including each tutoring session.

(f) Provides that a program is in addition to any other tutoring, accelerated instruction, mentoring, or similar program required by state or federal law to be provided by a school district.

(g) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to adopt guidelines for a program and a training program for students who volunteer to serve as tutors, including criteria for determining whether a student has successfully completed the training program, and for district employees who serve as program supervisors.

(h) Requires the board of trustees of each school district that establishes a program to adopt certain policies and procedures for the program.

(i) Entitles a student who serves as a tutor under this section for at least three hours each school week for a full semester in accordance with Section 54.225 and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rules adopted under that section to an exemption, as provided by Section 54.225, from the payment of tuition at an institution of higher education, as defined by Section 61.003.

(j) Requires a school district that operates a program, to enable THECB to determine eligibility for tuition exemptions under Section 54.225, to submit, not later than May 21 and December 21 of each year, to THECB written reports that contain the information specified by rules adopted under Section 54.225(e)(2) and posted on THECB's website.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.225, as follows:

Sec. 54.225. STUDENTS WHO SERVED AS HIGH SCHOOL TUTORS. (a) Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education to exempt from the payment of tuition for a number of semester credit hours determined under Subsection (b) a resident of this state who is enrolled as an undergraduate student at the institution and who served as a tutor in a high school program under Section 29.917.

(b) Entitles a student, except as provided by Subsection (c), to an exemption under this section from the payment of tuition for three semester credit hours for each semester the student served as a tutor in high school in accordance with Section 29.917, this section, and rules adopted under Subsection (e).

(c) Provides that a student is not eligible for an exemption under this section for more than 24 semester credit hours or after earning a bachelor's degree.

(d) Prohibits a student from making any claim for money or another benefit in exchange for the right to an exemption under this section.

(e) Requires THECB to adopt certain rules governing the granting or denial of an exemption under this section, rules relating to determining a student's eligibility for an exemption, and a uniform application form for exemption.

(f) Requires THECB to post on its website a list of eligibility requirements or other eligibility information a school district is required to submit to THECB for purposes of this section.

SECTION 3. Requires TEA to adopt guidelines and a training program for a program under Section 29.917, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than October 1, 2007.

SECTION 4. (a) Effective date of Section 54.225, Education Code: 2008 fall semester, except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Requires THECB to adopt rules and forms for the administration of Section 54.225, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2008.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.