

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1312
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Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Too often our culture pushes students toward earning a four-year degree, even if the student does not desire a career that requires a four-year degree. Many of Texas' rapidly growing fields are in technical fields. Recent data suggests that 80 percent of all jobs in Texas require some training beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree. Texas is not training enough students to keep up with the growing demand. If Texas continues to fall short, industries will look to other states for their needs.

The adult basic education program is a great opportunity to recover high school dropouts and those needing developmental education to get into the higher education pipeline. However, in Texas only 30 percent of adult basic education students with the goal of higher education actually make it there. The current system works entirely through the Texas Education Agency, and focuses too heavily on public education, making it difficult for those who seek higher education to get services they need. Community colleges are the perfect source to help adult basic education students reach their goal of attending an institution of higher education.

As proposed, S.B. 1312 creates the Jobs and Education for Texans Grant Program to target career and technology education programs. The grants will target three areas: expanding existing career and technology programs, especially those programs that are successful in completion and retention rates; expand into new career and technology programs, focusing on Texas' most critical needs; and scholarships for community and technical college students as an incentive to prepare for the most critical technology fields. The grant also creates a pilot program at the community college level to target adult basic education students in need of developmental education and dropout recovery.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the comptroller of public accounts in SECTION 1 (Section 134.008, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 3 (Section 61.0764, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle G, Title 3, Education Code, by adding Chapter 134, as follows:

CHAPTER 134. POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

SUBCHAPTER A. JOBS AND EDUCATION FOR TEXANS (JET) GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 134.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "public junior college" and "public technical institute."

Sec. 134.002. JOBS AND EDUCATION FOR TEXANS (JET) FUND. (a) Requires the comptroller of public accounts (comptroller) to establish and administer the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) fund as a dedicated account in the general revenue fund.

(b) Requires that certain amounts be deposited in the fund, including any amounts appropriated by the legislature for the fund for purposes of this subchapter, interest earned on the investment of money in the fund, and gifts, grants, and other donations received for the fund.

Sec. 134.003. **ADVISORY BOARD.** (a) Creates an advisory board of education and workforce stakeholders to assist the comptroller in administering this chapter.

(b) Sets forth the composition of the advisory board.

(c) Requires the advisory board to meet at least once each quarter to review received applications and recommend awarding grants under this subchapter.

Sec. 134.004. **JOBS AND EDUCATION FOR TEXANS (JET) GRANT PROGRAM.** Requires the comptroller to establish and administer the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program to provide grants to public junior colleges and public technical institutes that apply to the advisory board in the manner prescribed by the advisory board. Requires the comptroller to award the grants on the advice and recommendations of the advisory board. Authorizes grants to be awarded under this subchapter from the JET fund for certain purposes.

Sec. 134.005. **GRANTS FOR INNOVATIVE AND SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS.** (a) Authorizes the comptroller to award a grant for the development of programs to prepare low-income students for careers in high-demand occupations.

(b) Sets forth certain requirements for a program to be eligible to receive a grant under this section.

(c) Requires a public junior college or public technical institute, to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, to provide matching funds in accordance with rules adopted under Section 134.008. Authorizes the matching funds to be obtained from any source available to the college or institute, including in-kind contributions, community or foundation grants, individual contributions, and local government agency operating funds.

(d) Requires that grants awarded under this section be awarded in a manner that takes a balanced geographical distribution into consideration.

Sec. 134.006. **FUNDING FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.** (a) Authorizes the comptroller to award a grant for the development of new career and technical education courses or programs at public junior colleges and public technical institutes.

(b) Authorizes a grant received under this section to be used only for certain purposes.

(c) Requires the comptroller, in awarding a grant under this section, to primarily consider the potential economic returns to the state from the development of career and technical education course or program, and authorizes the comptroller to consider whether the course or program is part of a new, emerging industry or high-demand occupation.

(d) Requires that a public junior college or public technical institute, to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, provide matching funds in accordance with the rules adopted under Section 134.008. Authorizes that the matching funds be obtained from any source available to the college, including in-kind contributions, industry consortia, community or foundation grants, individual contributions, and local government agency operating funds.

Sec. 134.007. **SCHOLARSHIPS.** (a) Authorizes the comptroller to award a scholarship to a public junior college or public technical institute student.

(b) Requires a student, to be eligible to receive a scholarship under this section, to demonstrate financial need and be enrolled in a training program for a high-demand occupation, as determined by the comptroller on the recommendation of the advisory board.

Sec. 134.008. RULES. Requires the comptroller to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this subchapter.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 29.255, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c), to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to allocate funds under this section to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in an amount sufficient for the development, implementation, and administration of the adult basic education pilot program established under Section 61.0764.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0764, as follows:

Sec. 61.0764. ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "pilot program."

(b) Requires THECB, using funds received under Section 29.255(c), by rule to establish a pilot program under which participating junior college districts receive funding to establish adult education programs that focus on the provision of developmental education to support the transition from high school to college or a career and on dropout recovery.

(c) Requires a junior college district, to participate in the pilot program, to apply to THECB in the manner prescribed by THECB. Requires that the application include a detailed plan developed by the junior college district for the district's adult education program. Authorizes THECB to select for participation in the pilot program those junior college districts whose plans serve the purposes of the pilot program as determined by THECB.

(d) Authorizes THECB to adopt rules necessary to administer this section.

SECTION 4. Requires THECB to adopt the rules required by Section 61.0764, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes THECB, for that purpose, to adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.