

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2258
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Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Intensive summer programs (ISP) are collaborations among school districts and institutions of higher education to provide intensive academic instruction to promote college and workforce readiness for middle school, high school, and college students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. The statutory authority to carry out ISPs resides in provisions relating to public education, yet public education and higher education each serve a distinct student population. The overlap between the duties of the Texas Education Agency, which administers public education ISPs, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which operates ISPs for college students, can be confusing. The separate roles of these entities need clarification.

S.B. 2258 requires the coordinating board by rule to develop higher education bridge programs in the subject area of social science, in addition to mathematics, science, or English language arts, and clarifies that such development is to increase student success by reducing the need for developmental education. The bill requires the coordinating board by rule to develop a pilot program to award grants to institutions of higher education for intensive programs designed to address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of college and to allocate money for such grants.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 2258 amends the Education Code to remove a provision requiring the intensive summer pilot program for students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school or college to be established jointly by the commissioner of education and the commissioner of higher education by rule and instead requires the commissioner of education to establish a pilot program to provide intensive academic instruction during the period in which school is recessed for the summer to at-risk public school students, as such students are defined under provisions relating to a school district's compensatory, intensive, and accelerated instruction programs. The bill removes a requirement that the program be established from funds appropriated for that purpose and removes a provision authorizing the award of a grant under this pilot program to fund a program administered by an institution of higher education to provide intensive academic instruction to facilitate a student's transition from high school to a postsecondary institution. The bill removes provisions establishing the conditions under which a grant could be awarded to an institution of higher education, authorizing the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt instructional materials as necessary for students enrolled in this pilot program, and including the coordinating board in a requirement for the State Board of Education to include certain information technology instructional resources among the instructional materials approved for intensive summer programs under these provisions.

S.B. 2258 requires the coordinating board by rule to develop a higher education bridge program in the subject area of social science, in addition to the bridge programs in the subject areas of mathematics, science, or English language arts and clarifies that the purpose of such development is to increase student success by reducing the need for developmental education. The bill requires the coordinating board by rule to develop a pilot program to award grants to institutions of higher education for intensive programs designed to address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of college and removes a provision requiring the coordinating board by rule to develop financial assistance programs for educationally disadvantaged students who take college entrance and college readiness tests. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to award a grant for an intensive program designed to address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of college to an institution of higher education only if at least 50 percent of the students served in the program have a score on the Scholastic Assessment Test or American College Test that is less than the national mean score for that test; have been awarded a grant under the federal Pell grant program; are at least 20 years of age on the date the student enrolls as a first-time freshman in the institution of higher education; have enrolled or will initially enroll as a part-time student; or meet any other requirements established by the coordinating board.

S.B. 2258 includes providing funding to the commissioner of education to implement the intensive summer pilot program for at-risk public school students established by the commissioner under the bill's provisions and awarding grants to institutions of higher education under the pilot program developed by the coordinating board under the bill's provisions for intensive programs to meet the need of students at risk of dropping out of college among the coordinating board's allocation of the \$8.75 million per year appropriated for certain programs. The bill requires the coordinating board to provide these funds to the commissioner of education and to awards grants to institutions of higher education under these provisions in a manner consistent with the goals of the high school completion and success initiative and the goals in "Closing the Gaps," the state's master plan for higher education.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.