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S.B. No. 382

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a competitive grant program to fund promotion of early literacy programs in certain communities in this state.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 73, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter I to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER I. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY

Sec. 73.601. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Competitive grant program" means the competitive grant program to promote early literacy established under this subchapter.

(2) "Health care practitioner" has the meaning assigned by Section 112.001, Occupations Code.

(3) "Health science center" means The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

(4) "Literacy program" means a program to promote early literacy.

Sec. 73.602. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY. (a) The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston shall establish a competitive grant program to promote early literacy through which the health science center will award grants for the implementation of literacy programs, or the expansion of existing programs, and for the operation of those programs for a period of not less than two years.

1 (b) The health science center shall award grants under the
2 program to applicants, including applicants operating existing
3 programs, in a manner that ensures that the literacy programs
4 collectively:

5 (1) operate in multiple communities that are
6 geographically distributed throughout this state; and

7 (2) provide program services to approximately 50,000
8 children.

9 Sec. 73.603. LITERACY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. (a) A
10 literacy program funded through a grant awarded under this
11 subchapter must:

12 (1) strictly adhere to the program model developed by
13 the Reach Out and Read National Center, including any clinical,
14 programmatic, and data collection requirements of that model;

15 (2) provide matching funds in an amount equal to the
16 amount of the grant funds awarded under this subchapter;

17 (3) require that health care practitioners volunteer
18 to:

19 (A) in conjunction with performing well-child
20 examinations, provide books to children and encourage parents to
21 read to their children to develop preliteracy skills;

22 (B) maintain waiting rooms that encourage
23 children to read; and

24 (C) provide services designed to increase the
25 school readiness of children receiving program services; and

26 (4) partner with local adult literacy providers to
27 encourage parent literacy in appropriate circumstances.

1 (b) Matching funds under Subsection (a)(2) may include
2 in-kind contributions.

3 Sec. 73.604. APPLICATION. (a) A public or private entity,
4 including a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of
5 this state, may apply for a grant under this subchapter.

6 (b) To apply for a grant, an applicant must submit a written
7 application to the health science center on a form prescribed by the
8 health science center in consultation with the Reach Out and Read
9 National Center.

10 Sec. 73.605. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AWARDING GRANTS.
11 In addition to the factors described by Sections 73.602(b) and
12 73.603, in determining whether to award a grant to an applicant
13 under this subchapter, the health science center may consider:

14 (1) the demonstrated need for a literacy program in
15 the community in which the applicant proposes to operate or expand
16 the program, which the health science center shall determine by
17 considering:

18 (A) the poverty rate, the crime rate, the number
19 of births to Medicaid recipients, the rate of poor birth outcomes,
20 and the incidence of referrals of elementary school students for
21 remedial instruction or special education services, and of child
22 abuse and neglect, during a prescribed period in the community; and

23 (B) the need to enhance school readiness in the
24 community;

25 (2) the applicant's ability to participate in ongoing
26 monitoring and performance evaluations under Section 73.608,
27 including the applicant's ability to collect and provide

1 information requested by the health science center under Section
2 73.608(d);

3 (3) the applicant's ability to adhere to the literacy
4 program guidelines published under Section 73.606;

5 (4) the applicant's ability to develop broad-based
6 community support for implementing or expanding a literacy program,
7 as applicable; and

8 (5) the applicant's history of developing and
9 sustaining innovative, high-quality programs that meet the needs of
10 families and communities.

11 Sec. 73.606. LITERACY PROGRAM GUIDELINES. The health
12 science center, with the assistance of the Reach Out and Read
13 National Center, shall publish guidelines for the literacy programs
14 funded under this subchapter. The guidelines must adhere to the
15 Reach Out and Read national program model standards and guidelines
16 that have been tested and replicated in multiple communities.

17 Sec. 73.607. USE OF PROGRAM FUNDS. (a) In addition to
18 awarding grants under this subchapter, the health science center
19 may use program funds to:

20 (1) administer the competitive grant program; and

21 (2) purchase or contract to purchase discounted books
22 for use by grant recipients.

23 (b) A grant recipient may use grant funds awarded under this
24 subchapter only to cover costs related to implementing or expanding
25 and operating a literacy program, including costs related to:

26 (1) administering the literacy program;

27 (2) training and managing health care practitioners

1 who volunteer to participate in the literacy program; and

2 (3) purchasing or contracting to purchase discounted
3 books for use in the literacy program.

4 Sec. 73.608. PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION; ANNUAL
5 COMMITTEE REPORTS. (a) The health science center, with the
6 assistance of the Reach Out and Read National Center, shall publish
7 performance indicators that are designed to measure a grant
8 recipient's performance with respect to the literacy program
9 guidelines published under Section 73.606.

10 (b) The health science center shall:

11 (1) use the performance indicators published under
12 Subsection (a) to continuously monitor and formally evaluate on an
13 annual basis the performance of each grant recipient; and

14 (2) prepare and submit an annual report, not later
15 than December 1 of each year, to the Senate Committee on Education,
16 or its successor, and the House Public Education Committee, or its
17 successor, regarding the performance of each grant recipient during
18 the preceding state fiscal year with respect to providing literacy
19 program services.

20 (c) The report required under Subsection (b)(2) must
21 include:

22 (1) the number of low-income children receiving
23 literacy program services;

24 (2) the number of health care practitioners who
25 participate in the program and the estimated value of the services
26 provided by those practitioners under the program; and

27 (3) the extent to which each grant recipient adhered

1 to the Reach Out and Read national program model.

2 (d) On request, each grant recipient shall timely collect
3 and provide data and any other information required by the health
4 science center to monitor and evaluate the recipient or to prepare
5 the report required by this section.

6 Sec. 73.609. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING. (a) The
7 health science center shall actively seek and apply for any
8 available federal funds to assist in financing the competitive
9 grant program established under this subchapter.

10 (b) The health science center may use appropriated funds
11 from the state government and may accept gifts, donations, grants
12 of money, and in-kind contributions from the federal government,
13 local governments, private corporations, or other persons to assist
14 in financing the competitive grant program.

15 SECTION 2. The University of Texas Health Science Center at
16 Houston shall:

17 (1) as soon as practicable, apply for any available
18 federal funds to assist in financing the competitive grant program
19 under Subchapter I, Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this
20 Act, as required by Section 73.609, Education Code, as added by this
21 Act;

22 (2) not later than December 1, 2009, submit a report to
23 the Senate Committee on Education, or its successor, and the House
24 Public Education Committee, or its successor, regarding the
25 implementation and status of the competitive grant program required
26 by Subchapter I, Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this Act;

27 (3) not later than September 1, 2010, establish and

1 implement the competitive grant program required by Subchapter I,
2 Chapter 73, Education Code, as added by this Act, and, with the
3 assistance of the Reach Out and Read National Center, publish the
4 guidelines required by Section 73.606, Education Code, as added by
5 this Act; and

6 (4) not later than December 1, 2011, submit the
7 initial annual report required by Subdivision (2), Subsection (b),
8 Section 73.608, Education Code, as added by this Act.

9 SECTION 3. This Act does not make an appropriation. A
10 provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program,
11 creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental
12 entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the
13 legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the
14 provision.

15 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.