

By: Villarreal

H.B. No. 2517

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to eligibility for state credits for college tuition and  
3 fees for public high school students who receive diplomas by  
4 demonstrating early readiness for college.

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

6 SECTION 1. The heading to Section 28.0253, Education Code,  
7 is amended to read as follows:

8 Sec. 28.0253. [~~PILOT~~] PROGRAM: HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS FOR  
9 STUDENTS WHO DEMONSTRATE EARLY READINESS FOR COLLEGE; STATE CREDITS  
10 FOR TUITION AND FEES.

11 SECTION 2. Section 28.0253, Education Code, is amended by  
12 amending Subsections (b), (e), and (f) and adding Subsections (g)  
13 and (h) to read as follows:

14 (b) A research university that chooses to participate in the  
15 early college readiness diploma [~~pilot~~] program under this section  
16 shall:

17 (1) not later than September 1 of each year, make  
18 available on the university's Internet website detailed standards  
19 for use in the program regarding:

20 (A) the specific competencies that demonstrate a  
21 student's mastery of each subject area for which the Texas Higher  
22 Education Coordinating Board and the commissioner have adopted  
23 college readiness standards;

24 (B) the specific competencies that demonstrate a

1 student's mastery of a language other than English; and

2 (C) acceptable assessments or other means by  
3 which a student may demonstrate the student's early readiness for  
4 college with respect to each subject area and the language  
5 described by this subdivision, subject to Subsection (c);

6 (2) partner with at least 10 school districts that  
7 reflect the geographic diversity of this state and the student  
8 compositions of which reflect the socioeconomic diversity of this  
9 state; and

10 (3) assist school administrators, school counselors,  
11 and other educators in each of those school districts in designing  
12 the specific requirements of and implementing the program in the  
13 district.

14 (e) A student who receives a high school diploma through the  
15 [~~pilot~~] program is considered to have completed the recommended  
16 high school program adopted under Section 28.025(a). The student  
17 is not guaranteed admission to any institution of higher education  
18 or to any academic program at an institution of higher education  
19 solely on the basis of having received the diploma through the  
20 program.

21 (f) A student who receives a high school diploma through the  
22 program and is admitted to a public or private institution of higher  
23 education in this state is eligible for a state credit to apply  
24 toward tuition and mandatory fees under Subchapter K, Chapter 56,  
25 if the student satisfies other eligibility requirements under  
26 Section 56.203. At the end of each school year, the agency shall  
27 determine the average amount per student that will be saved the

1 following school year, by the state and by school districts  
2 partnering with a research university under this section, as a  
3 result of early graduation through the program in the current  
4 school. The amount of a student's state credit is, as determined  
5 under this subsection, the sum of the amount equal to 50 percent of  
6 the average amount per student that will be saved by the state and  
7 the amount equal to 50 percent of the average amount per student  
8 that will be saved by partnering school districts as a result of  
9 early graduation through the program.

10 (g) Administrative costs to the agency or to a research  
11 university under this section shall be paid from money saved by the  
12 state as a result of the early graduation of students receiving a  
13 high school diploma through the program.

14 (h) A research university that participates in the [~~pilot~~]  
15 program shall enter into an agreement with an education research  
16 center established under Section 1.005 to conduct an evaluation of  
17 the program with respect to that university and the school  
18 districts with which the university partners. Not later than  
19 January 1, 2013, the education research center shall provide a  
20 written report of the evaluation to the commissioner and the  
21 commissioner of higher education and make the report available on  
22 the center's Internet website. The report may include an analysis  
23 of the effects of the program on the university's admissions review  
24 process. This subsection expires January 31, 2013.

25 SECTION 3. Section 42.005, Education Code, is amended by  
26 adding Subsection (a-1) to read as follows:

27 (a-1) In computing the sum of attendance under Subsection

1 (a), for each day of the minimum number of days of instruction, 50  
2 percent of the students who received a high school diploma in the  
3 preceding school year through the program under Section 28.0253  
4 shall be considered in attendance for each day of the current school  
5 year in the school district from which the student graduated.

6 SECTION 4. Section 56.202(b), Education Code, is amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (b) A portion of the savings to the Foundation School  
9 Program that occur as a result of the program, including a portion  
10 of the savings that occur as a result of the program under Section  
11 28.0253, is dedicated to state credits for tuition or tuition and  
12 mandatory fees, as applicable, provided to an eligible person under  
13 the program.

14 SECTION 5. Sections 56.203(a), (b), and (c), Education  
15 Code, are amended to read as follows:

16 (a) To be eligible for an award through the Early High  
17 School Graduation Scholarship program, a person must:

18 (1) have graduated from a public high school in this  
19 state:

20 (A) in not more than 41 consecutive months and  
21 successfully completed the recommended or advanced high school  
22 program established under Section 28.025, if the person graduated  
23 on or after September 1, 2005;

24 (B) in not more than 46 consecutive months, with  
25 at least 30 hours of college credit, and successfully completed the  
26 recommended or advanced high school program established under  
27 Section 28.025, if the person graduated on or after September 1,

1 2005; ~~or~~]

2 (C) by receiving a high school diploma through  
3 the program established under Section 28.0253, notwithstanding  
4 Paragraph (A) or (B); or

5 (D) in not more than 36 consecutive months after  
6 successfully completing the requirements for a high school diploma,  
7 if the person graduated before September 1, 2005, regardless of  
8 whether the person successfully completed the recommended or  
9 advanced high school program established under Section 28.025;

10 (2) have attended one or more public high schools in  
11 this state for the majority of time the person attended high school;  
12 and

13 (3) be a citizen of the United States or otherwise  
14 lawfully authorized to be present in the United States.

15 (b) The eligibility for the Early High School Graduation  
16 Scholarship program of a person described by Subsection (a)(1)(A),  
17 ~~or~~ (B), or (C) ends on the sixth anniversary of the date that the  
18 person first becomes eligible to participate in the program, unless  
19 the person is provided additional time to participate in the  
20 program under Subsection (c).

21 (c) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to provide a  
22 person described by Subsection (a)(1)(A), ~~or~~ (B), or (C) who is  
23 otherwise eligible to participate in the Early High School  
24 Graduation Scholarship program additional time to use a state  
25 credit for tuition and mandatory fees under the program. The rules  
26 must require a person seeking an extension under this subsection to  
27 show hardship or other good cause that prevents the person from

1 enrolling in or continuing enrollment in an eligible institution  
2 during the period provided by Subsection (b). For purposes of this  
3 subsection, hardship or other good cause includes a severe illness  
4 or other debilitating condition, responsibility for the care of a  
5 sick, injured, or needy person, or active duty or other service in  
6 the United States armed forces.

7 SECTION 6. Section 56.204(a), Education Code, is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 (a) An eligible person under the Early High School  
10 Graduation Scholarship program is entitled to a state credit to  
11 apply toward tuition or tuition and mandatory fees, as applicable,  
12 at a public or private institution of higher education in this state  
13 in the following amounts:

14 (1) \$2,000 to apply toward tuition and mandatory fees  
15 if the person successfully completed the recommended or advanced  
16 high school program established under Section 28.025 and graduated  
17 from high school on or after September 1, 2005, in 36 consecutive  
18 months or less and an additional \$1,000 to apply toward tuition and  
19 mandatory fees if the person graduated with at least 15 hours of  
20 college credit;

21 (2) \$500 to apply toward tuition and mandatory fees if  
22 the person successfully completed the recommended or advanced high  
23 school program established under Section 28.025 and graduated from  
24 high school on or after September 1, 2005, in more than 36  
25 consecutive months but not more than 41 consecutive months and an  
26 additional \$1,000 to apply toward tuition and mandatory fees if the  
27 person graduated with at least 30 hours of college credit;

1           (3) \$1,000 to apply toward tuition and mandatory fees  
2 if the person successfully completed the recommended or advanced  
3 high school program established under Section 28.025 and graduated  
4 from high school on or after September 1, 2005, in more than 41  
5 consecutive months but not more than 45 consecutive months with at  
6 least 30 hours of college credit; ~~[or]~~

7           (4) the amount determined as the amount of the  
8 student's state credit under Section 28.0253(f) to apply toward  
9 tuition and mandatory fees if the person received a high school  
10 diploma through the program established under Section 28.0253,  
11 notwithstanding Subdivision (1), (2), or (3); or

12           (5) \$1,000 to apply only toward tuition if the person  
13 graduated before September 1, 2005, after successfully completing  
14 the requirements for a high school diploma in not more than 36  
15 consecutive months.

16           SECTION 7. Section 56.206(d), Education Code, is amended to  
17 read as follows:

18           (d) Subject to Section 56.203(b), an eligible person may use  
19 the state credit for enrollment in an eligible institution of  
20 higher education during any semester or summer session, except the  
21 initial use of the credit by a person who qualifies for an award  
22 under Section 56.203(a)(1)(A), ~~[or]~~ (B), or (C) may not be for  
23 enrollment during any term of a summer session immediately  
24 following the person's graduation from high school.

25           SECTION 8. The amendments to Section 28.0253, Education  
26 Code, and Subchapter K, Chapter 56, Education Code, made by this Act  
27 apply only to students who receive a high school diploma through the

1 program under Section 28.0253, Education Code, as amended by this  
2 Act, in the 2011-2012 school year or a later school year.

3 SECTION 9. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
4 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
5 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
6 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
7 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.