

By: Branch

H.B. No. 3515

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter GG to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER GG. TEXAS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (T-STEM) CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sec. 61.9791. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "STEM program" means a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program.

Sec. 61.9792. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. (a) Subject to available funding, the board may establish and administer, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program under which the board provides a scholarship to a student who meets the eligibility criteria prescribed by Section 61.9793.

(b) The purpose of the scholarship program under this section is to encourage students to enroll in STEM programs administered by lower-division postsecondary institutions in partnership with business and industry to address local employment needs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

1 Sec. 61.9793. ELIGIBLE STUDENT. (a) To receive an initial
2 scholarship under this subchapter, a student must:

3 (1) graduate from high school with a grade point
4 average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale in mathematics and
5 science courses;

6 (2) enroll in a STEM program at an eligible
7 institution; and

8 (3) agree to work not more than 15 hours a week for a
9 business that participates in the STEM program in partnership with
10 the eligible institution.

11 (b) To continue to qualify for a scholarship under this
12 subchapter, a student must:

13 (1) remain enrolled in a STEM program at an eligible
14 institution;

15 (2) maintain an overall grade point average of at
16 least 3.0 on a four-point scale;

17 (3) complete at least 80 percent of all semester
18 credit hours attempted for each semester;

19 (4) complete at least 30 semester credit hours in each
20 academic year; and

21 (5) work not more than 15 hours a week for a business
22 that participates in the STEM program in partnership with the
23 eligible institution.

24 Sec. 61.9794. ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION. (a) To qualify as an
25 eligible institution under this subchapter, an institution must:

26 (1) be an accredited public or private two-year
27 institution of higher education;

1 (2) admit at least 50 students into a STEM program each
2 academic year; and

3 (3) develop partnerships with business and industry
4 to:

5 (A) identify local employment needs in Science,
6 Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields; and

7 (B) provide part-time employment for students
8 enrolled in a STEM program.

9 (b) To maintain eligibility under this subchapter, an
10 institution must demonstrate to the board that at least 70 percent
11 of the institution's T-STEM Challenge Scholarship graduates become
12 employed by businesses in Science, Technology, Engineering, and
13 Mathematics (STEM) fields within three months after graduation.

14 Sec. 61.9795. LIMITATION. The board by rule may limit the
15 number of academic terms for which an eligible student may receive a
16 scholarship awarded under this subchapter.

17 Sec. 61.9796. FUNDING. The board may use any available
18 revenue, including legislative appropriations, and may solicit and
19 accept gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of this
20 subchapter.

21 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
22 shall adopt rules to implement Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education
23 Code, as added by this Act, not later than the 90th day after the
24 date the coordinating board first receives sufficient funding for
25 the purposes of that subchapter.

26 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.