

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 1729

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. The board shall 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.

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

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

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

1 (3) agree to work no more than 15 hours a week for a
2 business participating in the STEM program.

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

5 (1) remain enrolled in a STEM program at an eligible
6 institution;

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

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

11 (4) complete at least 30 semester credit hours per
12 academic year; and

13 (5) work no more than 15 hours a week for a business
14 participating in the STEM program.

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

17 (1) be a public junior college or public technical
18 institute;

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

21 (3) develop partnerships with business and industry
22 to:

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

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

27 (b) To maintain eligibility, beginning with the second year

1 following implementation of a scholarship program under this
2 subchapter, an institution must demonstrate to the board that at
3 least 70 percent of the institution's T-STEM Challenge Scholarship
4 graduates, within three months after graduation, are:

5 (1) employed by a business in a Science, Technology,
6 Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field; or

7 (2) enrolled in upper-division courses leading to a
8 baccalaureate degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and
9 Mathematics (STEM) field.

10 Sec. 61.9795. AMOUNT; FUNDING. (a) Subject to available
11 funding, the board shall award scholarships, with at least 50
12 percent of the amount awarded from private funds.

13 (b) An eligible student may receive a scholarship awarded
14 under this subchapter for not more than two academic years.

15 (c) The board may use any available revenue, including
16 legislative appropriations, and may solicit and accept gifts and
17 grants for purposes of this subchapter.

18 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
19 shall award scholarships under Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education
20 Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2011-2012 academic
21 year. The coordinating board shall adopt the rules required by that
22 subchapter as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

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