

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 an accredited public or private two-year
18 institution of higher education;

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 are employed by a business in a Science, Technology,
5 Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field within three months after
6 graduation.

7 Sec. 61.9795. AMOUNT; FUNDING. (a) Subject to available
8 funding, the board shall award scholarships totaling \$100 million
9 each biennium, with 50 percent of the amount awarded from state
10 appropriations and 50 percent of the amount awarded from private
11 matching funds.

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

14 (c) The board may solicit and accept gifts and grants for
15 purposes of this section.

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

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