

By: Villarreal

H.B. No. 2468

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to financial aid.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER I-1. Study of Grant Aid and Participation and Success in Higher Education.

Sec. 61.511. Study of Grant Aid and Participation and Success in Higher Education. (a) The board shall design and implement a series of randomized controlled trials with educational institutions and analyze the results to determine the causal relationship between the receipt of grant aid and student participation, persistence and graduation. The core purposes in these studies will be to determine the influence of grant aid in:

(1) the enrollment decisions of students from Texas public high schools;

(2) the extent to which student responses to grant aid change as students progress through the higher education pipeline; and

(3) the extent to which student responses to grant aid differ

(b) The board shall utilize the results of the randomized controlled trials to:

(1) validate quasi-experimental methods that address the

1 same research questions using the data normally collected by the
2 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for accountability
3 purposes;

4 (2) identify any additional required data elements to be
5 regularly collected by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating
6 Board in order to support the valid application of
7 quasi-experimental methodology; and

8 (3) develop a user-friendly tool based upon the validated
9 quasi-experimental methods that can be used to estimate the
10 likelihood of student participation, persistence, and graduation
11 as a function of financial aid.

12 (c) A student who participates in the study established by
13 this section is not subject to sections 56.307 (f), (i)(1) and (j)
14 of the Education Code.

15 (d) Notwithstanding any other section of the Education
16 Code, the maximum grant award for a student who participates in the
17 study established by this section is the amount determined by the
18 coordinating board as the average statewide amount of tuition,
19 required fees, and cost of instructional materials that a resident
20 student enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate degree

21 SECTION 2. Section 56.304, Education Code, is amended by
22 amending Subsections (a) read as follows:

23 (a) To be eligible initially for a TEXAS grant, a person who
24 graduated from high school before May 1, 2013, must:

25 (1) be a resident of this state as determined by
26 coordinating board rules;

27 (2) meet one [~~either~~] of the following academic

1 requirements:

2 (A) be a graduate of a public or accredited
3 private high school in this state who graduated not earlier than the
4 1998-1999 school year and who completed the recommended or advanced
5 high school curriculum established under Section 28.002 or 28.025
6 or its equivalent; ~~[or]~~

7 (B) have received an associate degree from a
8 public or private institution of higher education not earlier than
9 May 1, 2001; or

10 (C) be an undergraduate student who has:

11 (i) previously attended another
12 institution of higher education;

13 (ii) completed at least 24 semester credit
14 hours at any institution or institutions of higher education; and

15 (iii) earned an overall grade point average
16 of at least 2.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent on all
17 course

18 read as follows:

19 Sec. 56.3041. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY OF PERSON GRADUATING FROM
20 HIGH SCHOOL ON OR AFTER MAY 1, 2013, AND ENROLLING IN A GENERAL
21 ACADEMIC TEACHING INSTITUTION]. (a) To ~~[Notwithstanding Section~~
22 ~~56.304(a), to]~~ be eligible initially for a TEXAS grant, a person
23 graduating from high school on or after May 1, 2013, and enrolling
24 in a general academic teaching institution must:

25 (1) be a resident of this state as determined by
26 coordinating board rules;

27 (2) meet the academic requirements prescribed by

1 Paragraph (A), (B), ~~or~~ (C) or (D) as follows:

2 (A) be a graduate of a public or accredited
3 private high school in this state who completed the recommended
4 high school program established under Section 28.025 or its
5 equivalent and have accomplished any two or more of the following:

6 (i) graduation under the advanced high
7 school program established under Section 28.025 or its equivalent,
8 successful completion of the course requirements of the
9 international baccalaureate diploma program, or earning of the
10 equivalent of at least 12 semester credit hours of college credit in
11 high school through courses described in Sections 28.009(a)(1),
12 (2), and (3);

13 (ii) satisfaction of the Texas Success
14 instrument designated by the coordinating board under Section
15 51.3062(c) [~~or (e)~~] or qualification for an exemption as described
16 by Section 51.3062(p), (q), or (q-1);

17 (iii) graduation in the top one-third of
18 the person's high school graduating class or graduation from high
19 school with a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point
20 scale or the equivalent; or

21 (iv) completion for high school credit of
22 at least one advanced mathematics course following the successful
23 completion of an Algebra II course, as permitted by Section
24 28.025(b-3), or at least one advanced career and technical course,
25 as permitted by Section 28.025(b-2);

26 (B) have received an associate degree from a
27 public or private institution of higher education; or

1 (C) be an undergraduate student who has:

2 (i) previously attended another
3 institution of higher education;

4 (ii) completed at least 24 semester credit
5 hours at any institution or institutions of higher education; and

6 (iii) earned an overall grade point average
7 of at least 2.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent on all
8 course work previously attempted or

9 (D) if sufficient money is available, meet the eligibility
10 coordinating board;

11 (4) be enrolled in an undergraduate degree or
12 certificate program at the general academic teaching institution;

13 (5) except as provided under rules adopted under
14 Section 56.304(h) be enrolled as:

15 (A) an entering undergraduate student for at
16 least three-fourths of a full course load, as determined by the
17 coordinating board, not later than the 16th month after the
18 calendar month in which the person graduated from high school;

19 (B) an entering undergraduate student who
20 entered military service not later than the first anniversary of
21 the date the person graduated from high school and who enrolled for
22 at least three-fourths of a full course load, as determined by the
23 coordinating board, at the general academic teaching institution
24 not later than 12 months after being honorably discharged from
25 military service; ~~or~~

26 (C) an ~~[a continuing]~~ undergraduate student for
27 at least three-fourths of a full course load, as determined by the

1 coordinating board, not later than the 12th month after the
2 calendar month in which the person received an associate degree
3 from a public or private institution of higher education; or
4 (D) an undergraduate student described by
5 Subdivision (2)(C) who has never previously received a TEXAS grant;
6 (2-a) "General academic teaching institution" has
7 the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

8 SECTION 5. Section 56.305(a), Education Code, is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 (a) After initially qualifying for a TEXAS grant, a person
11 may continue to receive a TEXAS grant during each semester or term
12 in which the person is enrolled at an eligible institution only if
13 the person:

14 (1) meets financial need requirements as defined by
15 the coordinating board;

16 (2) is enrolled in an undergraduate degree or
17 certificate program at an eligible institution;

18 (3) is enrolled for at least three-fourths of a full
19 course load for an undergraduate student, as determined by the
20 coordinating board;

21 (4) makes satisfactory academic progress toward an
22 undergraduate degree or certificate;

23 (5) if applicable under Section 56.3055, participates
24 in a student engagement program as required by that section; and

25 (6) [~~5~~] complies with any additional nonacademic
26 requirement adopted by the coordinating board.

27 SECTION 6. Subchapter M, Chapter 56, Education Code, is

1 amended by adding Section 56.3055 to read as follows:

2 entering undergraduate student at a general academic teaching
3 institution and receives a TEXAS grant from that institution must
4 participate in a student engagement program sponsored by the
5 institution and selected for the person by the institution.
6 Subject to Subsection (e), the person must complete the program
7 during the person's first academic year at the institution.

8 (b) Before each academic year begins, a general academic
9 teaching institution awarding TEXAS grants shall:

10 (1) develop one or more student engagement programs
11 designed to increase student persistence, retention, and
12 graduation rates; and

13 (2) determine the degree of program participation
14 necessary for a grant recipient to satisfy Subsection (a) and the
15 manner in which to document that participation.

16 (c) Not later than the seventh class day of the fall
17 semester, the institution shall communicate to each applicable
18 grant recipient information regarding the program or programs
19 developed by the institution under Subsection (b) and the manner in
20 which the recipient may satisfy the requirements of this section.

21 (d) A student engagement program may be operated through any
22 appropriate means, including:

23 (1) mentoring activity;

24 (2) a small group seminar or other learning community;

25 (e) The coordinating board may adopt rules to administer
26 this section, including a rule to allow a person to receive a TEXAS
27 grant without participating in a student engagement program or

1 after delaying that participation if the person is able to show
2 hardship or other good cause that affects the person's ability to
3 satisfy the requirements of this section. For purposes of this
4 subsection, hardship or other good cause includes a severe illness
5 or other debilitating condition, responsibility for the care of a
6 sick, injured, or needy person, or active duty or other service in
7 the United States armed forces.

8 (f) In adopting rules under Subsection (e), the
9 coordinating board shall appoint and consult with an advisory
10 committee composed of institutional business officers, financial
11 aid administrators, recognized student engagement experts,
12 student engagement program administrators, and undergraduate
13 students.

14 (g) This section does not apply to a person who first
15 receives a TEXAS grant for a semester or term before the 2014 fall
16 semester.

17 (h) Not later than December 31, 2018, each general academic
18 teaching institution shall submit to the coordinating board a
19 report that contains the following:

20 (1) the rate of participation of the institution's
21 TEXAS grant recipients in student engagement programs;
22 students at the institution with similar characteristics, such as
23 college readiness, income, or racial or ethnic background; and

24 (3) the institution's plans for improving persistence,
25 retention, and graduation rates for its TEXAS grant recipients.

26 (i) Each general academic teaching institution shall
27 attempt to consolidate the report required by Subsection (h) with

1 its other relevant reports to the coordinating board regarding the
2 TEXAS grant program.

3 (j) Subsections (g), (h), and (i) and this subsection expire
4 December 31, 2019.

5 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
6 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
7 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
8 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
9 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.