

By: West

S.B. No. 681

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot program for a three-year high school diploma plan and cost-neutral expansion of full-day prekindergarten programs.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 28, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 28.0255 to read as follows:

Sec. 28.0255. PILOT PROGRAM: THREE-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PLAN. (a) In this section, "certificate program," "public junior college," "public state college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) This section applies only to a school district:

(1) with an enrollment of more than 150,000 students;

and

(2) located primarily in a county that has a population of 2.2 million or more and that is adjacent to a county with a population of more than 600,000.

(c) A school district to which this section applies may develop and implement a pilot program for students who wish to obtain a high school diploma after completion of three years of secondary school attendance as an alternative to the traditional four-year period of attendance. The program must:

(1) be designed to serve the educational needs of students who do not anticipate immediate enrollment in a four-year

1 college or university after graduation from high school; and

2 (2) include partnerships between the school district
3 and public junior colleges, public technical institutes, public
4 state colleges, and any other public postsecondary institutions in
5 this state offering academic or technical education or vocational
6 training under a certificate program or an associate degree program
7 to facilitate the prompt enrollment of students in those
8 institutions after high school graduation under the program.

9 (d) Participation by a student in the program must be
10 voluntary, with approval of the student's parent. A student who
11 agrees to participate in the program may, on request, discontinue
12 participation and resume taking courses under the minimum,
13 recommended, or advanced high school program.

14 (e) Notwithstanding Section 28.025, the school district
15 shall specify the curriculum requirements for receiving a high
16 school diploma under the program. The curriculum requirements must
17 ensure that a student who graduates under the program possesses
18 sufficient knowledge and skills in English language arts and
19 mathematics to be capable of performing successfully in public
20 junior college-level courses.

21 (f) The school district shall submit the proposed
22 curriculum requirements to the State Board of Education for comment
23 and the commissioner for approval. The district may not implement
24 the program before obtaining the commissioner's approval of the
25 proposed curriculum requirements.

26 (g) A student is entitled to a high school diploma if the
27 student:

1 (1) successfully complies with the curriculum
2 requirements specified under Subsection (e); and

3 (2) performs satisfactorily, as determined by the
4 commissioner under Subsection (h), on end-of-course assessment
5 instruments listed under Section 39.023(c) for courses in which the
6 student was enrolled.

7 (h) For purposes of Subsection (g)(2), the commissioner
8 shall determine the level of satisfactory performance on applicable
9 end-of-course assessment instruments administered to a student.

10 (i) The school district shall report the academic
11 achievement record of students who have completed the program on a
12 transcript that clearly identifies the program and distinguishes
13 the program from the minimum, recommended, and advanced high school
14 programs.

15 (j) A student who has received a diploma under the program
16 is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirements under
17 Section 25.085.

18 (k) To the extent this section conflicts with any other
19 provision of this code or rule adopted under this code, this section
20 prevails.

21 (l) This section expires September 1, 2023.

22 SECTION 2. Subchapter E, Chapter 42, Education Code, is
23 amended by adding Section 42.2526 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 42.2526. ADJUSTMENT FOR DISTRICT OPERATING PILOT
25 PROGRAM. (a) This section applies only to a school district
26 operating a pilot program authorized by Section 28.0255.

27 (b) Beginning with the first school year that follows the

1 first school year in which students receive high school diplomas
2 under the pilot program authorized by Section 28.0255 and
3 continuing for every subsequent school year that the district
4 operates the pilot program, the commissioner shall provide funding
5 for the district's prekindergarten program under Section 29.153 on
6 a full-day basis for a number of prekindergarten students equal to
7 twice the number of students who received a high school diploma
8 under the pilot program authorized by Section 28.0255 during the
9 preceding school year.

10 (c) This section expires September 1, 2023.

11 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.