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H.B. No. 3836

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer early childhood education baccalaureate degree programs.

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

SECTION 1. Section 130.0012, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (b-1), (b-2), and (g-1) and amending Subsection (g) to read as follows:

(b-1) The coordinating board shall authorize a baccalaureate degree program in early childhood education at each public junior college located in a county with a population of greater than one million if:

(1) the county has a demonstrated initial need for at least 3,000 early childhood educators;

(2) the degree program curriculum is approved by the independent school districts located in the county that collectively represent at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade; and

(3) one of the following:

(A) before November 1, 2015, a regional public university located in the county or an immediately adjacent county is unable to obtain the approval of the independent school districts located in the county that collectively represent at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in kindergarten

1 through 12th grade for a detailed plan to:

2 (i) expand degree output of early childhood
3 and elementary certified teachers to collectively meet the
4 three-year average hiring demands of the independent school
5 districts located in the county and immediately adjacent counties,
6 including producing more prekindergarten teachers to support the
7 planned increases in prekindergarten enrollment for all public
8 schools;

9 (ii) implement an early childhood education
10 curriculum; and

11 (iii) fund the expansion of current or
12 development of new early childhood education programs, which does
13 not include state funding for new facilities; or

14 (B) before September 1, 2017, a regional public
15 university that received the approval of independent school
16 districts as described by Paragraph (A) is unable to demonstrate:

17 (i) the necessary current student
18 enrollment to produce sufficient early childhood and elementary
19 certified teachers within the next four years to meet the existing
20 hiring demands of the independent school districts located in the
21 county and immediately adjacent counties based on historical
22 three-year averages, including producing more prekindergarten
23 teachers to support the planned increases in prekindergarten
24 enrollment for all public schools; and

25 (ii) implementation of an early childhood
26 education curriculum meeting the expressed needs of the independent
27 school districts located in the county that collectively represent

1 at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in
2 kindergarten through 12th grade.

3 (b-2) The coordinating board may not subsequently terminate
4 authorization to offer an early childhood baccalaureate degree
5 program granted under Subsection (b-1) on the ground that
6 implementation of the degree program reduces the workforce need to
7 a level that is below the minimal threshold specified in Subsection
8 (b-1)(1).

9 (g) Except as provided by Subsection (g-1), in [In] its
10 recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for
11 public junior colleges, the coordinating board shall recommend that
12 a public junior college receive substantially the same state
13 support for junior-level and senior-level courses offered under
14 this section as that provided to a general academic teaching
15 institution for substantially similar courses. In determining the
16 contact hours attributable to students enrolled in a junior-level
17 or senior-level course offered under this section used to determine
18 a public junior college's proportionate share of state
19 appropriations under Section 130.003, the coordinating board shall
20 weigh those contact hours as necessary to provide the junior
21 college the appropriate level of state support to the extent state
22 funds for those courses are included in the appropriations. This
23 subsection does not prohibit the legislature from directly
24 appropriating state funds to support junior-level and senior-level
25 courses offered under this section.

26 (g-1) A degree program created under Subsection (b-1) may be
27 funded only by a public junior college's proportionate share of

1 state appropriations under Section 130.003, local funds, and
2 private sources. This subsection does not require the legislature
3 to appropriate state funds to support a degree program created
4 under Subsection (b-1).

5 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.