

By: West

S.B. No. 1810

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.