

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
85R4806 JRJ-F

S.B. 2118  
By: Seliger  
Higher Education  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Over the last several legislative sessions, there has been continued debate regarding allowing specific community colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in specific high-need workforce programs. This has generally been approached through a patchwork effort, with only select community colleges granted legislative approval to offer four-year degrees.

S.B. 2118 would allow, in a limited capacity, additional community colleges the ability to offer four year baccalaureate degrees in applied science, applied technology, and nursing upon meeting specific requirements, as determined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. This bill would be a more comprehensive statewide approach to this issue.

As proposed, S.B. 2118 amends current law relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 130.0012, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), (d), (e), (g), and (h) and adding Subsections (e-1), (f-1), (g-1), and (g-2), as follows:

(a) Authorizes, rather than requires, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to authorize public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science, applied technology, and nursing under this section. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Provides that THECB:

(1) is required to authorize baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science and applied technology at each public junior college that previously participated in a pilot project to offer baccalaureate degree programs. Creates this subdivision from existing text; and

(2) is authorized to authorize baccalaureate degree programs at one or more public junior colleges that offer a degree program in the fields of applied science, applied technology, or nursing and have demonstrated a workforce need.

(d) Prohibits a public junior college offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section from offering more than three, rather than five, baccalaureate degree programs at any time.

(e) Requires THECB, in determining whether a public junior college is authorized to offer baccalaureate degree programs and what degree programs are authorized to be offered, to:

(1) apply the same criteria and standards THECB uses to approve baccalaureate degree programs at general academic teaching institutions;

(2) consider certain factors, including workforce need, complementarity, whether the program offered in the same field has been successful, and the ability to support the degree program with student enrollment, rather than the program, and the adequacy of facilities, faculty, administration, libraries, and other resources, including evidence provided by THECB and the Texas Board of Nursing that a public junior college seeking approval of a baccalaureate degree program in nursing has secured adequate long-term clinical space; and

(3) ensure the program would not draw faculty employed by a neighboring institution offering a similar program.

(e-1) Authorizes a public junior college to offer a baccalaureate degree program under this section only if its junior college district had a taxable property valuation amount of not less than \$10 billion in the preceding year.

(f-1) Requires THECB to establish minimum admission standards for students enrolling in a baccalaureate degree program in nursing offered by a public junior college under this section.

(g) Authorizes a degree program created under this section, except as provided by Subsection (g-1), to be funded solely by a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003 (State Appropriation for Public Junior Colleges), local funds, and private sources. Provides that this subsection does not require the legislature to appropriate state funds to support a degree program created under this section.

(g-1) Requires THECB, notwithstanding Subsection (g), in its recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for public junior colleges, to recommend that a public junior college that previously participated in a pilot project to offer baccalaureate degree programs receive substantially the same state support for junior-level and senior-level courses in the fields of applied science and applied technology offered under this section as that provided to a general academic teaching institution for substantially similar courses. Requires THECB, for purposes of this subsection, in determining the contact hours attributable to students enrolled in a junior-level or senior-level course in the field of applied science or applied technology offered under this section used to determine a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003, to weigh those contact hours as necessary to provide the junior college the appropriate level of state support to the extent state funds for those courses are included in the appropriations. Provides that this subsection does not prohibit the legislature from directly appropriating state funds to support junior-level and senior-level courses to which this subsection applies. Creates this subsection from existing text. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(g-2) Prohibits a public junior college from charging a student enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program offered under this section tuition and fees in an amount that exceeds the amount of tuition and fees charged by the junior college to a similarly situated student who is enrolled in an associate degree program in a corresponding field.

(h) Requires each public junior college offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section, each biennium, to conduct a review of each baccalaureate degree program offered and prepare a report on the operation, quality, and effectiveness of those degree programs. Requires a copy of the report to be delivered to THECB in the form and at the time determined by THECB. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.