

By: Howard

H.B. No. 3768

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 3768:

By: Lozano

C.S.H.B. No. 3768

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Guided Pathways program to facilitate the completion by students of undergraduate certificate and degree programs.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER S-1. TEXAS GUIDED PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Sec. 61.841. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Program" means the Texas Guided Pathways program established under this subchapter.

(2) "Texas OnCourse initiative" means the postsecondary education and career counseling academy developed by The University of Texas at Austin under Section 33.009.

Sec. 61.842. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM. (a) The Texas Guided Pathways program is established to inform, empower, and support current and prospective students at institutions of higher education by providing those students clear and efficient pathways to completion of undergraduate certificate and degree programs.

(b) The goals of the program are to:

(1) provide recommended course sequences for all undergraduate certificate and degree programs offered at institutions of higher education;

(2) increase the efficiency of transferring course

credit between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education;

(3) empower students to make well-informed choices by making useful course planning information available to students electronically;

(4) decrease the cost of completing undergraduate certificate and degree programs by helping students avoid taking courses that do not count toward the programs; and

(5) streamline student pathways to completion of undergraduate certificate and degree programs in a manner aligned with state goals to increase educational attainment.

Sec. 61.843. RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCES. (a) Each institution of higher education shall develop a recommended course sequence for each undergraduate certificate or degree program offered by the institution. Each recommended course sequence must:

(1) be designed to enable a student to obtain a certificate or degree, as applicable, within:

(A) for an associate degree or certificate program, four semesters or other academic terms; or

(B) for a baccalaureate degree program, eight semesters or other academic terms;

(2) include a specific sequence in which courses should be completed to ensure completion of the applicable program within the time frame described by Subdivision (1); and

(3) be aligned with the applicable certificate or degree requirements published by the institution.

(b) Not later than June 1 of each year, each institution of

1 higher education shall:

2 (1) after reviewing and, if necessary, updating each
3 recommended course sequence, adopt a version of each recommended
4 course sequence to take effect beginning with entering freshmen and
5 undergraduate transfer students for the following academic year;

6 (2) submit to the board, in an electronic format
7 specified by the board, each recommended course sequence and, if
8 the institution does not use the common course numbering system,
9 information regarding the course equivalent under the common course
10 numbering system, if any, for each course included in that course
11 sequence; and

12 (3) post each recommended course sequence, including
13 any information required to be provided under Subdivision (2) for
14 that course sequence, on the institution's Internet website in a
15 location that is accessible from the institution's website home
16 page by use of not more than three links.

17 (c) Each institution of higher education shall inform
18 students about the recommended course sequences, including how to
19 use those course sequences as a tool to aid in course selection, and
20 incorporate those course sequences into student advising.

21 (d) To enable students to compare recommended course
22 sequences at institutions of higher education, each institution of
23 higher education shall post on the institution's Internet website a
24 link to the web-based platform on recommended course sequences
25 developed by the board under Subsection (g).

26 (e) After notice to the board, an institution of higher
27 education may modify the institution's recommended course

1 sequences as necessary to:

2 (1) incorporate recommended changes identified as a
3 result of any program evaluation conducted by the institution; or

4 (2) comply with applicable institutional policies,
5 accreditation requirements, and state or federal law.

6 (f) An institution of higher education shall honor each
7 version of a recommended course sequence adopted by the institution
8 under Subsection (b)(1), including any necessary modifications
9 made to the course sequence under Subsection (e), for at least the
10 four academic years occurring after the date on which that version
11 of the course sequence is adopted.

12 (g) The board, in consultation with the Texas OnCourse
13 initiative and its partnering institutions of higher education,
14 shall establish a statewide web-based platform that enables a
15 student to:

16 (1) search for and compare recommended course
17 sequences at institutions of higher education; and

18 (2) determine whether a specific lower-division
19 course offered by an institution of higher education and identified
20 using the common course numbering system would transfer to another
21 institution of higher education for course credit applied toward
22 the student's undergraduate certificate or degree program and count
23 toward that institution's recommended course sequence for that
24 program.

25 (h) In establishing the web-based platform under Subsection
26 (g), the board may use technology platforms provided by the
27 National Student Clearinghouse or any other electronic data sharing

1 and exchange platforms that meet nationally accepted standards,
2 conventions, and practices.

3 (i) The board shall ensure that an electronic link to the
4 web-based platform established under Subsection (g) is posted on
5 the Internet website of any electronic common application system
6 developed by the board.

7 (j) Not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year,
8 the board shall submit to the members of the legislature a report on
9 the recommended course sequences at institutions of higher
10 education. The report must include an analysis of the alignment of
11 courses taken by students in each undergraduate certificate or
12 degree program at an institution of higher education with the
13 institution's recommended course sequence for that program.

14 Sec. 61.844. TRANSFER COMPACTS. (a) Not later than March
15 15 of each year, each institution of higher education shall submit
16 to the board in an electronic format specified by the board:

17 (1) a list of the transfer compacts in which the
18 institution participates; and

19 (2) a copy of, or an electronic link to a copy of, each
20 transfer compact listed under Subdivision (1).

21 (b) The board shall provide any necessary support for the
22 development of transfer compacts between institutions of higher
23 education.

24 (c) The board, in consultation with the Texas OnCourse
25 initiative and its partnering institutions of higher education,
26 shall establish a statewide web-based platform that provides to
27 students information regarding transfer compacts between

1 institutions of higher education, including an electronic link to
2 each transfer compact submitted to the board under Subsection (a).

3 (d) In establishing the web-based platform under Subsection
4 (c), the board may use technology platforms provided by the
5 National Student Clearinghouse or any other electronic data sharing
6 and exchange platforms that meet nationally accepted standards,
7 conventions, and practices.

8 (e) Not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year,
9 the board shall submit to the members of the legislature a report on
10 transfer compacts between institutions of higher education. The
11 report must include an analysis of the impact of those compacts on
12 students' efficient progress toward completion of an undergraduate
13 certificate or degree program.

14 Sec. 61.845. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS. The board may
15 solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or
16 private source for any expenses related to the program.

17 Sec. 61.846. RULES. The board, in consultation with
18 institutions of higher education:

19 (1) shall adopt rules for the electronic submission of
20 information required to be submitted to the board under this
21 subchapter; and

22 (2) may adopt rules as necessary to implement the
23 program.

24 SECTION 2. Subchapter S-1, Chapter 61, Education Code, as
25 added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2018-2019 academic
26 year.

27 SECTION 3. Notwithstanding Section 61.843(b), Education

1 Code, as added by this Act, not later than August 15, 2018, each
2 public institution of higher education shall adopt, submit to the
3 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and post on the
4 institution's Internet website the initial recommended course
5 sequences as required under that section.

6 SECTION 4. Not later than November 1, 2018, the Texas Higher
7 Education Coordinating Board shall submit its initial report
8 required under Section 61.843(j), Education Code, as added by this
9 Act.

10 SECTION 5. Not later than March 15, 2019, the Texas Higher
11 Education Coordinating Board shall establish the statewide
12 web-based platforms required under Sections 61.843(g) and
13 61.844(c), Education Code, as added by this Act.

14 SECTION 6. Not later than November 1, 2020, the Texas Higher
15 Education Coordinating Board shall submit its initial report
16 required under Section 61.844(e), Education Code, as added by this
17 Act.

18 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.