

By: Watson

S.B. No. 644

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

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

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

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

(a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may ~~shall~~ authorize public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science, ~~and~~ applied technology, early childhood education, and nursing under this section. Offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college.

(b) The coordinating board:

(1) shall 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; and

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

(e) In determining what baccalaureate degree programs are to be offered, the coordinating board shall:

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

(2) consider the following factors:

(A) [~~(1)~~] the workforce need for the degree programs in the region served by the junior college;

(B) [~~(2)~~] how those degree programs would complement the other programs and course offerings of the junior college and whether the associate degree program offered by the junior college in the same field has been successful;

(C) [~~(3)~~] whether those degree programs would unnecessarily duplicate the degree programs offered by other institutions of higher education; [~~and~~]

(D) [~~(4)~~] the ability of the junior college to support the program with student enrollment and the adequacy of the junior college's facilities, faculty, administration, libraries, and other resources; and

(E) whether the junior college meets the taxable property valuation amount established in Section 130.032.

(g) Except as provided by Subsection (g-1), a degree program created under this section may be funded solely by a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003, local funds, and private sources. This subsection does not require the legislature to appropriate state funds to support a degree program created under this section.

1 (g-1) Notwithstanding Subsection (g), in ~~[In]~~ its
2 recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for
3 public junior colleges, the coordinating board shall recommend that
4 a public junior college that previously participated in a pilot
5 project to offer baccalaureate degree programs receive
6 substantially the same state support for junior-level and
7 senior-level courses in the fields of applied science and applied
8 technology offered under this section as that provided to a general
9 academic teaching institution for substantially similar courses.
10 For purposes of this subsection, in ~~[In]~~ determining the contact
11 hours attributable to students enrolled in a junior-level or
12 senior-level course in the field of applied science or applied
13 technology offered under this section used to determine a public
14 junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under
15 Section 130.003, the coordinating board shall weigh those contact
16 hours as necessary to provide the junior college the appropriate
17 level of state support to the extent state funds for those courses
18 are included in the appropriations. This subsection does not
19 prohibit the legislature from directly appropriating state funds to
20 support junior-level and senior-level courses to which this
21 subsection applies ~~[offered under this section]~~.

22 (h) Each biennium, each ~~[Each]~~ public junior college
23 offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section shall
24 conduct a review of each baccalaureate degree program offered and
25 prepare a ~~[biennial]~~ report on the operation, quality, and
26 effectiveness of those ~~[the junior college's baccalaureate]~~ degree
27 programs. A ~~[and shall deliver a]~~ copy of the report shall be

1 delivered to the coordinating board in the form and at the time
2 determined by the coordinating board.

3 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
4 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
5 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
6 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
7 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.