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S.B. No. 1055

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the administration by the Texas Workforce Commission of  
a workforce diploma pilot program.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 4, Labor Code, is amended by  
adding Chapter 317 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 317. WORKFORCE DIPLOMA PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 317.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Adult" means any individual who is over the age of  
compulsory school attendance prescribed by Section 25.085,  
Education Code.

(2) "Program" means the workforce diploma pilot  
program established under this chapter.

Sec. 317.002. PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION;  
PURPOSE. The commission, in consultation with the Texas Education  
Agency, shall establish and administer a workforce diploma pilot  
program under which eligible high school diploma-granting entities  
participating in the program may be reimbursed for successfully  
assisting adult students to obtain a high school diploma and  
develop technical career readiness skills and employability.

Sec. 317.003. REQUEST FOR PROGRAM PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS.  
Not later than October 15 of each year, the commission shall publish  
a request for qualifications for providers to participate in the  
program.

1       Sec. 317.004. PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to  
2 participate as a provider under the program, a provider must:

3               (1) apply to the commission in the manner prescribed  
4 by commission rule;

5               (2) be a public, nonprofit, or private high school  
6 diploma-granting entity accredited by a regional accrediting body;

7               (3) have at least two years of experience providing  
8 dropout reengagement services to adult students, including  
9 recruitment, learning plan development, and proactive coaching and  
10 mentoring, leading to the obtainment of a high school diploma;

11               (4) be equipped to:

12                       (A) provide:

13                               (i) academic skill intake assessment and  
14 transcript evaluations;

15                               (ii) remediation coursework in literacy and  
16 numeracy;

17                               (iii) a research-validated academic  
18 resiliency assessment and intervention;

19                               (iv) employability skills development  
20 aligned to employer needs;

21                               (v) career pathways coursework;

22                               (vi) preparation for the attainment of  
23 industry-recognized credentials; and

24                               (vii) career placement services; and

25                       (B) develop a learning plan that integrates  
26 academic requirements and career goals; and

27               (5) offer a course catalog that includes all courses

1 necessary to meet high school graduation requirements in this  
2 state.

3 Sec. 317.005. PROVIDER APPROVAL; LIST OF APPROVED  
4 PROVIDERS. (a) Not later than November 15 of each year, the  
5 commission shall publish a list of providers approved by the  
6 commission to participate in the program during the next calendar  
7 year.

8 (b) An approved provider maintains approval to participate  
9 in the program during a subsequent calendar year without reapplying  
10 to the commission unless the provider is removed from the approved  
11 provider list as provided by Section 317.008.

12 Sec. 317.006. REIMBURSEMENT OF PROGRAM PROVIDERS FOR  
13 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. (a) To the extent money is available for  
14 that purpose, the commission shall reimburse each approved provider  
15 participating in the program for the achievement of the following  
16 milestones by students receiving services from the provider:

17 (1) \$250 for the completion of a half credit;

18 (2) \$250 for the completion of an employability skills  
19 certification program equal to at least one Carnegie unit or the  
20 equivalent;

21 (3) \$250 for the attainment of an industry-recognized  
22 credential requiring not more than 50 hours of training;

23 (4) \$500 for the attainment of an industry-recognized  
24 credential requiring at least 50 but not more than 100 hours of  
25 training;

26 (5) \$750 for the attainment of an industry-recognized  
27 credential requiring more than 100 hours of training; and

1           (6) \$1,000 for the obtainment of a high school  
2 diploma.

3           (b) Not later than the 10th calendar day of each month, an  
4 approved provider participating in the program shall submit to the  
5 commission an invoice for the milestones achieved by the provider's  
6 students during the previous calendar month.

7           (c) The commission shall reimburse approved program  
8 providers in the order in which invoices are received by the  
9 commission until all funds available for the program are exhausted.

10           Sec. 317.007. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than January 15 of  
11 each year, each approved provider that participated in the program  
12 during the previous calendar year shall report to the commission  
13 the following data regarding the provider's students for that year:

14           (1) the number of students for which the provider  
15 received reimbursement under the program;

16           (2) the total number of credits earned by the  
17 students;

18           (3) the total number of employability skills  
19 certification programs completed by the students;

20           (4) the total number of industry-recognized  
21 credentials attained by the students in each of the funding tiers  
22 described by Sections 317.006(a)(3), (4), and (5); and

23           (5) the number of students who obtained a high school  
24 diploma.

25           Sec. 317.008. PROVIDER PERFORMANCE REVIEW. (a) The  
26 commission by rule shall prescribe minimum performance standards  
27 for providers participating in the program. The minimum

1 performance standards must include:

2 (1) a graduation rate of at least 50 percent; and

3 (2) a program cost per graduate of \$7,000 or less.

4 (b) For purposes of Subsections (a)(1) and (2), the  
5 commission by rule shall develop formulas to make the appropriate  
6 calculations. The graduation rate must be calculated one cohort  
7 year in arrears.

8 (c) The commission shall review data from each  
9 participating approved provider annually to ensure that the  
10 services offered by the provider are meeting the minimum  
11 performance standards. If the commission determines that an  
12 approved provider did not meet the minimum performance standards in  
13 the previous calendar year, the commission shall place the provider  
14 on probationary status for the remainder of the current calendar  
15 year.

16 (d) The commission shall remove from the approved provider  
17 list published under Section 317.005 any provider that does not  
18 meet the minimum performance standards for two consecutive calendar  
19 years.

20 Sec. 317.009. REPORT. Not later than December 1 of each  
21 even-numbered year, the commission shall submit to the legislature  
22 a report on the effectiveness of the program. The commission shall  
23 include in the report a recommendation regarding whether the  
24 program should be continued, expanded, or terminated.

25 Sec. 317.010. EXPIRATION. This chapter expires September  
26 1, 2025.

27 SECTION 2. The Texas Workforce Commission is required to

1 implement a provision of this Act only if the legislature  
2 appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If the  
3 legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that  
4 purpose, the Texas Workforce Commission may, but is not required  
5 to, implement a provision of this Act using other appropriations  
6 available for that purpose.

7 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.