

By: Taylor

S.B. No. 1452

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to designation of autism innovation zones by the commissioner of education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 29.028 to read as follows:

Sec. 29.028. AUTISM INNOVATION ZONES. (a) The commissioner may:

(1) on application of a school district or open-enrollment charter school, designate a campus of the district or school as an autism innovation zone; and

(2) from funds appropriated or donated for purposes of this section, award a grant to support implementation of innovative instruction to students with autism at the campus in accordance with this section.

(a-1) The total amount of grants awarded under this section during the state fiscal biennium ending August 31, 2021, may not exceed \$10 million. This subsection expires December 1, 2021.

(b) A campus designated as an autism innovation zone must:

(1) implement with fidelity an innovative instructional program for students with autism approved by the commissioner for purposes of this section that incorporates the measurable annual goals contained in the students' individualized education programs developed under Section 29.005;

1 (2) comply with objectives, metrics, and other autism
2 innovation zone requirements imposed by the commissioner through
3 rules adopted under Subsection (g); and

4 (3) provide all data relating to the autism innovation
5 zone requested by the agency.

6 (c) A campus designated as an autism innovation zone is not
7 subject to interventions under the state accountability system
8 described by Section 39A.101(a) or 39A.111 for the first two years
9 of the designation, provided that the campus implements the
10 instructional program with fidelity and complies with each autism
11 innovation zone requirement to the satisfaction of the
12 commissioner. The period that a campus is exempt from
13 interventions as provided by this subsection is not:

14 (1) included in calculating consecutive school years
15 under Section 39A.101(a) or 39A.111; or

16 (2) considered a break in consecutive school years of
17 unacceptable ratings for purposes of determining the need for
18 intervention under Section 39A.101(a) or 39A.111.

19 (d) The commissioner may revoke designation of a campus as
20 an autism innovation zone and suspend associated grant funding if
21 the commissioner determines that the campus has failed to implement
22 the instructional program with fidelity or comply with any
23 requirement imposed under this section.

24 (e) A school district or open-enrollment charter school may
25 use a pay for success program approved by the commissioner under
26 Section 44.904 to pay costs associated with designation of a campus
27 as an autism innovation zone.

1 (f) The commissioner may accept gifts, grants, or donations
2 from any public or private source for purposes of this section.

3 (g) The commissioner may adopt rules as necessary to
4 administer this section.

5 (h) A decision or determination by the commissioner under
6 this section is final and may not be appealed.

7 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.