

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 959
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
6/8/2021
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Community colleges across Texas offer a wide array of workforce training programs, including courses that lead to licenses and certifications in essential and high-demand fields. Currently, however, the state's performance-based funding model does not take into account courses for certification or licensure requiring less than 360 contact hours. Accordingly, many colleges are unable to maintain or expand these programs, even as the state continues to suffer from a shortage of skilled trade laborers. What's more, the omission of these courses in funding models has forced colleges to raise tuition for them, further limiting opportunities for low-income students to enter shorter-term educational programs that lead to good-paying jobs.

S.B. 959 would require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in making its recommendations for success-based junior college funding (i.e., performance-based funding, which amounts to roughly 10 percent of state appropriations to junior colleges), to consider achievement in qualified continuing workforce education programs offered by those colleges but for which credit toward a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree is not awarded.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 959 amends current law relating to student success-based funding recommendations for certain continuing workforce education courses offered by public junior colleges.

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 61.0593, Education Code, by adding Subsection (f-1), as follows:

(f-1) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in making its recommendations under Subsection (f) (relating to requiring THECB to consider undergraduate student success measures in devising funding formulas for certain institutions and in making recommendations to the legislature) relating to institutional appropriations of incentive funds for public junior colleges based on achievement on student success measures, in the manner and to the extent THECB considers appropriate and in consultation with those colleges, to incorporate the consideration of student success measures, and include appropriate funding recommendations based on those success measures, achieved in qualified continuing workforce education courses offered by those colleges for which credit toward a certificate or associate's degree is not awarded. Provides that, for purposes of this subsection, a continuing workforce education course is considered qualified if the course is consistent with the role and mission of a public junior college and is designed to prepare students with skills necessary to attain external workforce credentials, including a certification or license, or employment in a specific high-demand occupation, regardless of whether the course is part of a recognized sequence of courses that requires a specific number of contact hours.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2021.