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H.B. No. 2766

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a rural dual credit pilot program by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.0765 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.0765. RURAL DUAL CREDIT PILOT PROGRAM. (a) The board shall establish a pilot program under which the board awards grants to participating public junior colleges to provide financial assistance to educationally disadvantaged high school students for all or part of the cost of enrolling in dual credit courses at the college.

(b) The board shall select not more than 10 public junior colleges in the small or medium public junior college peer group, as identified by the board, to participate in the pilot program. In selecting public junior colleges, the board shall, to the extent practicable, ensure that at least one public junior college from each region of the state is included.

(c) A participating public junior college must:

(1) use grant funds awarded under this section to provide financial assistance to eligible students for all or part of the cost of tuition and required fees for dual credit courses at the college;

(2) work with high schools that partner with the

1 college to provide dual credit courses and elect to participate in
2 the pilot program to:

3 (A) inform eligible students regarding the pilot
4 program and how those courses relate to postsecondary education and
5 career paths; and

6 (B) assist eligible students in applying to
7 enroll in those courses; and

8 (3) collect and report to the board data on:

9 (A) participation rates of eligible students in
10 the pilot program;

11 (B) outreach efforts regarding the pilot
12 program; and

13 (C) the percentage of eligible students
14 receiving financial assistance under the pilot program who graduate
15 from high school:

16 (i) in the top 10 percent of the student's
17 high school class; or

18 (ii) with a workforce certificate or
19 credential.

20 (d) A student is eligible to receive financial assistance
21 under the pilot program if the student:

22 (1) is educationally disadvantaged;

23 (2) is enrolled in a participating public or private
24 high school, including a home school, in the service area of a
25 participating public junior college; and

26 (3) has completed less than 60 semester credit hours
27 at an institution of higher education.

1 (e) Funds provided to an eligible student under the pilot
2 program must be used for the cost of tuition or required fees for
3 dual credit courses at the participating public junior college.

4 (f) A public or private high school, including a home
5 school, that partners with a participating public junior college to
6 provide dual credit courses and elects to participate in the pilot
7 program must provide to students in grade nine or the equivalent
8 information regarding dual credit opportunities and the funding
9 available for dual credit courses under the pilot program.

10 (g) Not later than December 1, 2022, the board shall
11 evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program and report the
12 results of the evaluation to the legislature. In evaluating the
13 pilot program, the board shall determine:

14 (1) any increase in:

15 (A) the rate of participation of eligible
16 students in dual credit courses;

17 (B) the number of dual credit semester credit
18 hours or the equivalent attempted by eligible students; and

19 (C) the number of eligible students who graduate
20 from high school:

21 (i) in the top 10 percent of the student's
22 high school class; or

23 (ii) with a workforce certificate or
24 credential; and

25 (2) whether the pilot program should be expanded to
26 all public junior colleges in the small and medium peer groups, as
27 identified by the board.

1 (h) This section expires September 1, 2023.

2 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
3 shall establish the pilot program under Section 61.0765, Education
4 Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable following the
5 effective date of this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.