

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 54

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to a study and report by the Texas Higher Education
3 Coordinating Board regarding best practices for assisting students
4 with autism spectrum disorder.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 61.06694 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 61.06694. STUDY AND REPORT ON ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH
9 AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER. (a) The board shall conduct a study to
10 determine best practices for assisting students with autism
11 spectrum disorder who are enrolled at institutions of higher
12 education.

13 (b) The study must:

14 (1) identify and track:

15 (A) the number of students with autism spectrum
16 disorder who graduate from secondary schools in this state;

17 (B) the number of students with autism spectrum
18 disorder who are enrolled at institutions of higher education;

19 (C) the student financial assistance available
20 to students with autism spectrum disorder who enroll at
21 institutions of higher education; and

22 (D) the graduation rates of students with autism
23 spectrum disorder who enroll at institutions of higher education;

24 and

1 (2) identify and examine best practices and program
2 modules from public and private institutions of higher education
3 outside this state that have achieved successful results in working
4 with students with autism spectrum disorder.

5 (c) In conducting the study, the board shall collaborate
6 with school districts that offer specialized programs for students
7 with autism spectrum disorder to determine how those programs could
8 be replicated at or extended to postsecondary institutions.

9 (d) Not later than December 1, 2023, the board shall submit
10 to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house
11 of representatives, and the commissioner of education a written
12 report that includes the study's findings and any recommendations
13 for legislative or other action.

14 (e) This section expires January 1, 2024.

15 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.