

By: West

S.B. No. 2111

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of a grant program for regional postsecondary education collaboratives.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER W. REGIONAL POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

COLLABORATIVES GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 61.931. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Low-income student" means a student who is eligible to receive a grant under the federal Pell Grant program or has equivalent need, as determined by board rule.

(2) "Regional postsecondary education collaborative" means a partnership or other collaboration between stakeholders in education that is focused on improving postsecondary educational outcomes in a region of the state.

Sec. 61.932. GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The board shall establish and administer a competitive grant program under which the board awards grants to eligible regional postsecondary education collaboratives to improve postsecondary educational outcomes for low-income students in the state.

(b) In awarding grants under the program, the board shall give priority to eligible regional postsecondary education

1 collaboratives that:

2 (1) focus on supporting low-income students; or

3 (2) have a demonstrated connection to targeted
4 workforce fields, as determined by the board.

5 Sec. 61.933. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive a grant
6 under this subchapter, a regional postsecondary education
7 collaborative must:

8 (1) include at least one school district and public
9 junior college;

10 (2) raise a minimum amount of funding from other
11 sources for the collaborative's costs, as established by board
12 rule;

13 (3) develop and submit to the board a plan detailing
14 how the collaborative would use grant funds awarded under this
15 subchapter in a manner permitted under Section 61.935;

16 (4) build partnerships committed to changing
17 postsecondary education systems and improving postsecondary
18 educational outcomes through the use of data, mutual
19 accountability, and engagement between a student and the student's
20 community;

21 (5) measure the collaborative's success by achievement
22 of increasing postsecondary enrollment and completion at any
23 institution of higher education or private or independent
24 institution of higher education and career entry for all students
25 the collaborative assists;

26 (6) provide personalized outreach to students and
27 parents or caregivers;

1 (7) provide proactive, holistic supports to assist
2 students in postsecondary persistence and completion and in
3 connecting with employers; and

4 (8) satisfy any additional requirements established
5 by board rule.

6 Sec. 61.934. GRANT AMOUNT. (a) A grant awarded to an
7 eligible regional postsecondary education collaborative under the
8 program must be made for a period sufficient to cover the enrollment
9 in, persistence in, and timely completion of a certificate or
10 degree program for two consecutive cohorts of students.

11 (b) Each grant consists of, for each cohort:

12 (1) an initial amount at the beginning of the first
13 academic year for which the grant is awarded equal to \$1,000 for
14 each low-income student who:

15 (A) graduated in the preceding school year from a
16 high school participating in the collaborative; and

17 (B) enrolls at an institution of higher education
18 or a private or independent institution of higher education for
19 that academic year; and

20 (2) at the end of each academic year for which the
21 grant is awarded, a bonus for each student described by Subdivision
22 (1) who:

23 (A) persists, as determined by board rule, at an
24 institution of higher education or a private or independent
25 institution of higher education; or

26 (B) timely completes a certificate or degree
27 program, as determined by board rule, at an institution of higher

1 education or a private or independent institution of higher
2 education.

3 (c) Subject to Subsection (e), the bonus per student under
4 Subsection (a)(2)(A) is an amount equal to \$25 million divided by
5 the total number of students who qualify for the bonus.

6 (d) Subject to Subsection (e), the bonus per student under
7 Subsection (a)(2)(B) is an amount equal to \$20 million divided by
8 the total number of students who qualify for the bonus.

9 (e) The amount of a bonus under Subsection (a)(2)(A) or (B)
10 may not exceed \$2,000 per student.

11 Sec. 61.935. GRANT USE. A grant awarded to an eligible
12 regional postsecondary education collaborative under this
13 subchapter may be used only for:

- 14 (1) staff support for the collaborative;
15 (2) student services designed to increase
16 postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion;
17 (3) student financial assistance;
18 (4) programs that provide training for jobs in
19 targeted workforce fields, as determined by the board; and
20 (5) other expenses approved by the board.

21 Sec. 61.936. REPORTING. (a) Each regional postsecondary
22 education collaborative that receives a grant under this subchapter
23 shall collect and report to the board information regarding
24 postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion,
25 disaggregated by category and semester or term, as required by the
26 board to assist the board in fulfilling its duties under this
27 subchapter.

1 (b) Not later than December 1 of each year, the board shall
2 submit to the legislature a report on the effectiveness of the grant
3 program established under this subchapter and any recommendations
4 for legislative or other action.

5 Sec. 61.937. RULES. The board may adopt rules as necessary
6 to implement this subchapter.

7 Sec. 61.938. FEDERAL FUNDING CONTINGENCY. The board is
8 required to implement the grant program established under this
9 subchapter only if federal funding is provided to the board for that
10 purpose as part of any federal coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
11 relief spending appropriated on or after January 1, 2021. If such
12 funding is not provided for that purpose, the board may, but is not
13 required to, implement the grant program using other money
14 available to the board for that purpose.

15 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
16 Board shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter W, Chapter 61,
17 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after
18 the effective date of this Act.

19 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
20 begin awarding grants under Subchapter W, Chapter 61, Education
21 Code, as added by this Act, for the first academic year for which
22 federal funding is appropriated for that purpose.

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