

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 1361
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Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Concerns have been raised around the availability of resources to assist postsecondary students who are parents. According to the American Council on Education, over a quarter of all undergraduate college students are raising children, and about 44 percent are doing so without the support of a partner. At 80 percent, women represent the majority of single parents in college. These students are often working adults who must balance their work and school lives with parenting.

H.B. 1361 seeks to address these concerns by providing for the designation of a liaison officer at each public institution of higher education to provide information on support services and other resources to student-parents, including public benefit programs, health coverage, employment and transportation assistance, and academic success strategies.

H.B. 1361 amends current law relating to the designation of liaison officers to assist certain students at public institutions of higher education who are parents.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 51.9357, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.9357, as follows:

Sec. 51.9357. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO ARE PARENTS; REPORT. (a) Defines "coordinating board" and "institution of higher education."

(b) Requires each institution of higher education to designate at least one employee of the institution to act as a liaison officer for current or incoming students at the institution who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. Requires that the liaison officer provide to the students information regarding support services and other resources available to the students at the institution, including:

(1) resources to access:

(A) medical and behavioral health coverage and services; and

(B) public benefit programs, including programs related to food security, affordable housing, and housing subsidies;

(2) parenting and child care resources;

(3) employment assistance;

- (4) transportation assistance;
- (5) student academic success strategies; and
- (6) any other resources developed by the institution to assist the students.

(c) Requires an institution of higher education, not later than May 1 of each academic year, to submit to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) a report that contains the following information regarding students enrolled at the institution for the current academic year who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age:

- (1) the number of those students;
- (2) demographic data, including age, race, sex, ethnicity, and national origin;
- (3) academic data, including full-time or part-time enrollment status and graduation, transfer, and withdrawal rates; and
- (4) other data as prescribed by THECB rule.

(d) Requires THECB to adopt rules to administer this section, including rules to ensure compliance with federal law regarding confidentiality of student medical or educational information, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. Section 1320d et seq.), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g), and any state law relating to the privacy of student information.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.09081, as follows:

Sec. 61.09081. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO ARE PARENTS. Requires THECB to designate at least one employee of THECB to act as a liaison officer for current or incoming students at institutions of higher education who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. Requires that the liaison officer assist in coordinating college readiness and student success efforts relating to those students.

SECTION 3. (a) Requires THECB, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to adopt rules to implement Sections 51.9357 and 61.09081, Education Code, as added by this Act.

(b) Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2023–2024 academic year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.