

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 1590
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Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There is an issue with high-achieving Texans from underserved communities going out of state for their postsecondary education. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has reported that more than 15 percent of the top 10 percent of students in Black, Latino, and rural communities do not enroll directly in two-year or four-year institutions of higher education in Texas or enroll in institutions out of state. As such, there is a need to create a personal and professional development program to help guide these students throughout their time in higher education and beyond.

H.B. 1590 seeks to address this issue by establishing the Texas Leadership Scholars program to provide academic achievement support and leadership development to eligible high school students with financial need.

H.B. 1590 amends the Education Code to establish the Texas Leadership Scholars Program to serve as a merit-based scholarship and leadership opportunity program for high-achieving, emerging leaders with financial need administered by THECB. The bill requires THECB, using money appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose, to award scholarships and provide academic achievement support and leadership development to eligible students under the program.

The bill requires a student to meet the following eligibility criteria for purposes of initially participating in the program:

- be a graduate of a public high school in Texas;
- either have qualified for automatic admission in a general academic teaching institution or be nominated by their high school and hold another academic distinction recognized by THECB;
- be enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution;
- be economically disadvantaged, as determined by THECB rule; and
- comply with any additional requirement adopted by THECB.

The bill conditions the student's continued participation in the program on meeting the following criteria:

- being enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution;
- maintaining a minimum overall grade point average as determined by THECB rule; and
- complying with any additional requirements adopted by THECB.

H.B. 1590 authorizes THECB to enter into agreements with general academic teaching institutions or other institutions of higher education to provide students in the program with the following:

- research-based support to make satisfactory academic progress and graduate on time; and
- leadership development opportunities, including: program cohort learning communities; mentoring, research, and internship opportunities; networking with state government, business, and civic leaders; and statewide cohort learning institutes or seminars.

The bill authorizes THECB to solicit, accept, and spend grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of the program. The bill requires THECB to adopt rules

for the administration of the program, including rules providing for the amount and permissible uses of a scholarship awarded under the program.

H.B. 1590 amends current law relating to the establishment of the Texas Leadership Scholars Program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 61.897, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Subchapter T-3, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER T-3. TEXAS LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Sec. 61.891. DEFINITION. Defines "program."

Sec. 61.892. ESTABLISHMENT; ADMINISTRATION. (a) Provides that the Texas Leadership Scholars Program (program) is established to serve as a merit-based scholarship and leadership opportunity program for high-achieving, emerging leaders with financial need.

(b) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to administer the program.

(c) Requires THECB, using money appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose, to award scholarships and provide academic achievement support and leadership development to eligible students under the program.

Sec. 61.893. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY. Requires a student, to be initially eligible to participate in the program, to:

(1) have graduated from a public high school in this state;

(2) either:

(A) have qualified for automatic admission to a general academic teaching institution under Section 51.803 (Automatic Admission: All Institutions);
or

(B) be nominated by the student's high school for participation in the program and hold another academic distinction recognized by THECB;

(3) be enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution;

(4) be economically disadvantaged, as determined by THECB rule; and

(5) comply with any additional requirement adopted by THECB.

Sec. 61.894. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY. Authorizes a student, after establishing initial eligibility to participate in the program under Section 61.893, to continue participating in the program only if the student:

(1) is enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution;

(2) maintains a minimum overall grade point average determined by THECB rule; and

(3) complies with any additional requirement adopted by THECB.

Sec. 61.895. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. Authorizes THECB to enter into agreements with general academic teaching institutions or other institutions of higher education to provide students participating in the program with:

(1) research-based support to make satisfactory academic progress and graduate on time; and

(2) leadership development opportunities, including:

(A) program cohort learning communities;

(B) mentoring, research, and internship opportunities;

(C) networking with state government, business, and civic leaders; and

(D) statewide cohort learning institutes or seminars.

Sec. 61.896. GRANTS, GIFTS, AND DONATIONS. Authorizes THECB to solicit, accept, and spend grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of the program.

Sec. 61.897. RULES. Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of the program, including rules providing for the amount and permissible uses of a scholarship awarded under the program.

SECTION 2. Requires THECB to adopt rules to administer Subchapter T-3, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.