By:  Hinojosa, Blanco, West S.B. No. 2059

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to grant programs established to support nursing education and training.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER Z-1. GRANT PROGRAMS SUPPORTING NURSING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sec. 61.9641.  DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1)  "Clinical site" means an acute care or rehabilitation facility, a primary care setting, a long-term care facility, a nursing home, a residential care setting, or any other site identified by the board as providing clinical learning experiences for nursing students.

(2)  "Nursing advisory committee" means the nursing advisory committee established under Section 104.0155, Health and Safety Code.

Sec. 61.9642.  CLINICAL SITE NURSE PRECEPTOR GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The board, in consultation with the nursing advisory committee, shall establish and administer a program to award grants to eligible clinical sites to support the use of nurse preceptors in providing clinical training to nursing students.

(b)  To be eligible for a grant under this section, a clinical site must:

(1)  provide clinical training to nursing students through the use of one or more nurse preceptors;

(2)  comply with any clinical site requirements established by the board; and

(3)  comply with any other requirements adopted by board rule.

Sec. 61.9643.  CLINICAL SITE INNOVATION AND COORDINATION PROGRAM. The board shall establish and administer a program to award grants to eligible clinical sites that create and operate innovative pilot programs that will support nursing performed at clinical sites in this state by increasing the number of nurses, improving the working environment for nurses, improving the retention of nurses, addressing workplace safety, and coordinating with other clinical sites any solutions found to address common nursing concerns.

Sec. 61.9644.  NURSING FACULTY GRANT PROGRAM: PART-TIME POSITIONS. (a) The board shall award grants under a nursing faculty grant program to eligible institutions of higher education to provide funding for qualified nursing staff working at clinical sites who serve as part-time nursing faculty at those institutions.

(b)  The amount of a grant and the number of grants to be awarded must be based on the total number of nursing staff serving as part-time faculty in institutions of higher education throughout the state in the year for which the grant is awarded.

(c)  A grant received under this section must be expended to support the applicable nursing faculty positions, including the faculty stipend.

(d)  An institution of higher education must certify in the grant application the number of unfilled faculty positions to which the application applies and, after a grant is awarded, must certify which of those positions have been filled before receipt of the grant funds.

(e)  The board shall prescribe the dates for the submission of applications and the award of grants under this section to ensure that a grant recipient has sufficient time to prepare for receipt and effective use of the grant funds before the academic period for which the grant is awarded.

(f)  Grant amounts are awarded under this section for two consecutive state fiscal years. The board may distribute a grant amount for nursing faculty only on receiving the certification from the institution of higher education that the applicable nurse faculty position has been filled. For each first-year nursing faculty position for which a clinical site receives an initial grant amount in a state fiscal year, the board shall make available an equal grant amount for the subsequent state fiscal year contingent on filling the part-time nursing faculty positions funded by the grant in that second year.

Sec. 61.9645.  NURSING FACULTY GRANT PROGRAM: CLINICAL TRAINING. (a) The board shall award grants under a nursing faculty grant program to eligible clinical sites to provide funding for qualified nursing faculty of institutions of higher education who seek to obtain additional clinical training by working part-time at a clinical site.

(b)  The amount of a grant and the number of grants to be awarded must be based on the total number of nursing faculty in institutions of higher education throughout the state in the year for which the grant is awarded.

Sec. 61.9646.  FUNDS. (a) In consultation with the nursing advisory committee, the board shall allocate funds appropriated for purposes of this subchapter and any other funds received as described by Subsection (b) as the board considers appropriate to further the purposes of this subchapter.

(b)  In addition to money appropriated by the legislature, the board may solicit, accept, and spend gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of the grant programs established under this subchapter.

Sec. 61.9647.  RULES. In consultation with the nursing advisory committee, the board shall adopt rules for the administration of the grant programs established under this subchapter. The rules must include:

(1)  administrative provisions relating to the awarding of grants under this subchapter, such as:

(A)  eligibility criteria for clinical sites or institutions of higher education, as applicable;

(B)  grant application procedures;

(C)  guidelines relating to grant amounts;

(D)  procedures for evaluating grant applications; and

(E)  procedures for monitoring the use of grants; and

(2)  methods for tracking the effectiveness of grants that:

(A)  use data reasonably available to the board or the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies; and

(B)  evaluate transferability and scalability of innovation programs.

SECTION 2.  (a) As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the grant programs required by Subchapter Z-1, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act. The board may adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

(b)  Not later than September 1, 2023, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall establish the grant programs required by Subchapter Z-1, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, and shall begin to award grants under those programs not later than January 1, 2024.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.