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H.B. No. 4363

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program for certain students at public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 56, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter S to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER S. FUTURE TEXAS TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sec. 56.501. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "Eligible institution" means a general academic teaching institution or a private or independent institution of higher education, as those terms are defined by Section 61.003, that operates an eligible educator preparation program.

(3) "Enrolled full-time" means enrolled for at least 12 semester credit hours or participating in a clinical teaching assignment or internship that meets criteria established by State Board for Educator Certification rule for initial certification as a classroom teacher.

(4) "Scholarship program" means the Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program authorized by this subchapter.

Sec. 56.502. PURPOSE. The Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program is created to recruit, prepare, and retain a

1 talented and diverse workforce of career teachers to be leaders in
2 their field and to provide assistance for tuition, mandatory fees,
3 and other usual and customary costs of attendance at an eligible
4 institution as provided by Sections 56.506 and 56.507.

5 Sec. 56.503. ELIGIBLE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS. To be
6 eligible to participate in the scholarship program, an educator
7 preparation program must:

8 (1) be operated by an eligible institution;

9 (2) provide a structured system of support to assist
10 scholarship recipients to successfully complete the educator
11 preparation program;

12 (3) require additional hours of field-based
13 experience for students above the minimum hours required by State
14 Board for Educator Certification rule;

15 (4) require additional hours of clinical teaching
16 experience for students above the minimum hours required by State
17 Board for Educator Certification rule;

18 (5) provide or facilitate opportunities for
19 scholarship recipients to participate in learning opportunities
20 beyond the university classroom setting; and

21 (6) comply with other eligibility criteria
22 established by coordinating board rule.

23 Sec. 56.504. INITIAL STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP.

24 (a) To be eligible initially for a scholarship under the
25 scholarship program, a person must:

26 (1) be a Texas resident under Section [54.052](#);

27 (2) either:

1 (A) be enrolled full-time in an eligible
2 institution; or

3 (B) have applied for admission to an eligible
4 institution and enroll full-time in that institution in the
5 academic year immediately following the person's application;

6 (3) once enrolled full-time in an eligible
7 institution, be working toward a baccalaureate or master's degree
8 and on track to be admitted to an eligible educator preparation
9 program, as verified by the eligible institution operating the
10 educator preparation program;

11 (4) demonstrate a commitment to pursuing a career as a
12 classroom teacher in a public school in this state:

13 (A) in a teaching field identified by the
14 commissioner of education as experiencing a critical shortage of
15 teachers in this state; or

16 (B) in a public school in this state in which a
17 majority of students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged;

18 (5) comply with Section [28.0256](#); and

19 (6) comply with any other academic or nonacademic
20 requirements adopted by the coordinating board under this
21 subchapter.

22 (b) A person is not eligible to receive a scholarship under
23 the scholarship program if the person has been convicted of a felony
24 or misdemeanor offense relating to the duties and responsibilities
25 of the education profession, including:

26 (1) an offense involving moral turpitude;

27 (2) an offense involving a form of sexual or physical

1 abuse of a minor or student or other illegal conduct in which the
2 victim is a minor or student;

3 (3) a felony offense involving the possession,
4 transfer, sale, or distribution of or conspiracy to possess,
5 transfer, sell, or distribute a controlled substance, as defined by
6 Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et
7 seq.;

8 (4) an offense involving the illegal transfer,
9 appropriation, or use of school district funds or other district
10 property; or

11 (5) an offense involving an attempt by fraudulent or
12 unauthorized means to obtain or alter a professional certificate or
13 license issued under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.

14 Sec. 56.505. CONTINUING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND ACADEMIC
15 PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS. (a) After initially qualifying for a
16 scholarship under this subchapter, a person may continue to receive
17 a scholarship under the scholarship program during each semester or
18 term in which the person is enrolled at an eligible institution only
19 if the person:

20 (1) demonstrates a continued commitment to pursuing a
21 career as a classroom teacher:

22 (A) in a teaching field identified by the
23 commissioner of education as experiencing a critical shortage of
24 teachers in this state; or

25 (B) in a public school in this state in which a
26 majority of students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged;

27 (2) remains enrolled full-time in an eligible

1 institution;

2 (3) remains enrolled in or is on track to be admitted
3 to an eligible educator preparation program, as verified by the
4 eligible institution in which the person is enrolled;

5 (4) makes satisfactory academic progress toward
6 completion of a baccalaureate or master's degree and approval to
7 take a teacher certification exam, as verified by the eligible
8 institution; and

9 (5) complies with any other academic or nonacademic
10 requirements adopted by the coordinating board under this
11 subchapter.

12 (b) A person is not eligible to continue to receive a
13 scholarship under the scholarship program if the person has been
14 convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense described by Section
15 56.504(b).

16 (c) If a person fails to meet any of the requirements of
17 Subsection (a) after the completion of any semester or term, the
18 person may not receive a scholarship under this subchapter during
19 the next semester or term in which the person enrolls. A person may
20 become eligible to receive a scholarship under this subchapter in a
21 subsequent semester or term if the person:

22 (1) completes a semester or term during which the
23 person is not eligible for a scholarship; and

24 (2) meets all the requirements of Subsection (a).

25 (d) For the purpose of this section, a person makes
26 satisfactory academic progress toward a baccalaureate or master's
27 degree only if:

1 (1) in the person's first academic year the person
2 meets the satisfactory academic progress requirements of the
3 eligible institution in which the person is enrolled; and

4 (2) in a subsequent academic year, the person:

5 (A) completes at least 75 percent of the semester
6 credit hours attempted in the person's most recent academic year;
7 and

8 (B) has earned an overall grade point average of
9 at least 3.0 on a four-point scale or the equivalent on coursework
10 previously attempted at an eligible institution.

11 (e) A person who is eligible to receive a scholarship under
12 this subchapter continues to remain eligible to receive the
13 scholarship if the person enrolls in or transfers to an eligible
14 educator preparation program at another eligible institution.

15 (f) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to allow a
16 person who is otherwise eligible to receive a scholarship under
17 this subchapter, in the event of a hardship or for other good cause
18 shown, including a showing of a severe illness or other
19 debilitating condition that may affect the person's academic
20 performance or that the person is responsible for the care of a
21 sick, injured, or needy person and that the person's provision of
22 care may affect the person's academic performance, to receive a
23 scholarship under this subchapter:

24 (1) while enrolled in a number of semester credit
25 hours that is less than the number required to be enrolled
26 full-time; or

27 (2) if the person's grade point average or completion

1 rate falls below the satisfactory academic progress requirements of
2 Subsection (d).

3 (g) A person's eligibility for a scholarship under this
4 subchapter ends on the earlier of:

5 (1) the fourth anniversary of the initial award of a
6 scholarship under this subchapter to the person and the person's
7 enrollment in an eligible institution; or

8 (2) the person's completion of the baccalaureate or
9 master's degree program described by Section 56.504(a)(3).

10 Sec. 56.506. SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT. (a) Beginning with the
11 2024-2025 academic year, the amount of a scholarship under this
12 subchapter is equal to the amount of the scholarship for the
13 preceding academic year, adjusted for inflation using the college
14 tuition and fees index component of the consumer price index
15 produced by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

16 (a-1) For the 2023-2024 academic year, the amount of a
17 scholarship under this subchapter is \$12,000. This subsection
18 expires September 1, 2024.

19 (b) The amount of a scholarship under this subchapter may
20 not be reduced by any other scholarship, grant, or financial aid
21 which the scholarship recipient receives.

22 (c) Not later than January 31 of each year, the coordinating
23 board shall publish the amounts of each scholarship established by
24 the board for the academic year beginning the next fall semester.

25 Sec. 56.507. SCHOLARSHIP USE. A person receiving a
26 scholarship under this subchapter may use the money to pay any usual
27 and customary cost of attendance at an eligible institution

1 incurred by the person. The institution may disburse all or part of
2 the proceeds of a scholarship under this subchapter to an eligible
3 person only if the tuition and required fees incurred by the person
4 at the institution have been paid.

5 Sec. 56.508. ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM. (a) The
6 coordinating board shall adopt any rules necessary to:

7 (1) establish eligibility criteria for educator
8 preparation programs in accordance with Section 56.503 and for
9 scholarship recipients in accordance with Sections 56.504 and
10 56.505;

11 (2) establish procedures for the application process
12 and for selecting scholarship recipients from among eligible
13 applicants; and

14 (3) administer the scholarship program.

15 (b) In establishing criteria for eligible educator
16 preparation programs under Section 56.503, the coordinating board
17 shall consult with the State Board for Educator Certification. The
18 coordinating board shall consider the standards used by the State
19 Board for Educator Certification in identifying effective,
20 high-quality educator preparation programs grounded in
21 evidence-based best practices and, to the maximum extent possible,
22 align the eligibility criteria to those standards.

23 (c) In establishing criteria for eligible persons under
24 Sections 56.504 and 56.505, the coordinating board shall consult
25 with representatives of the educator preparation programs from
26 eligible institutions.

27 (d) In developing rules related to distributing a

1 scholarship, the coordinating board shall consult with financial
2 aid coordinators of eligible institutions.

3 (e) The total amount of scholarships awarded may not exceed
4 the amount available for the program from appropriations, gifts,
5 grants, or other funds.

6 (f) From money appropriated by the legislature for the
7 purposes of this subchapter, the coordinating board annually shall
8 determine the allocation of money available for scholarships among
9 eligible institutions and shall distribute the money accordingly.

10 (g) In determining who should receive a scholarship under
11 this subchapter, the coordinating board shall give priority to
12 awarding scholarships to:

13 (1) persons who demonstrate the greatest financial
14 need and whose expected family contribution, as determined
15 according to the methodology used for federal student financial
16 aid, does not exceed 60 percent of the average statewide amount of
17 tuition and required fees;

18 (2) first-generation college students, as defined by
19 coordinating board rule; and

20 (3) persons who demonstrate a commitment both to
21 entering a teaching field identified by the commissioner of
22 education as experiencing a critical shortage of teachers and to
23 teaching in a public school in this state in which a majority of
24 students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged.

25 SECTION 2. Section 56.308(b), Education Code, is amended to
26 read as follows:

27 (b) Each school district shall:

1 (1) notify its middle school students, junior high
2 school students, and high school students, those students' teachers
3 and school counselors, and those students' parents of the TEXAS
4 grant, ~~and~~ Teach for Texas grant, and Future Texas Teachers
5 Scholarship programs, the eligibility requirements of each
6 program, the need for students to make informed curriculum choices
7 to be prepared for success beyond high school, and sources of
8 information on higher education admissions and financial aid in a
9 manner that assists the district in implementing a strategy adopted
10 by the district under Section 11.252(a)(4); and

11 (2) ensure that each student's official transcript or
12 diploma indicates whether the student has completed or is on
13 schedule to complete:

14 (A) the recommended or advanced high school
15 curriculum required for grant eligibility under Section 28.002 or
16 28.025; or

17 (B) for a school district covered by Section
18 56.304(f)(1), the required portion of the recommended or advanced
19 high school curriculum in the manner described by Section
20 56.304(f)(2).

21 SECTION 3. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
22 Board shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter S, Chapter 56,
23 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after
24 the effective date of this Act.

25 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
26 begin awarding scholarships under Subchapter S, Chapter 56,
27 Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2023-2024

1 academic year.

2 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
3 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
4 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
5 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
6 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.