

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](#);

19 (6) complete a criminal history background check from:

20 (A) any law enforcement or criminal justice
21 agency; or

22 (B) a private entity that is a consumer reporting
23 agency governed by the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. Section
24 1681 et seq.);

25 (7) provide the educator preparation program with the
26 completed background check report and any supplemental
27 documentation the program may request to evaluate the background

1 check report for the purposes of this section; and

2 (8) comply with any other academic or nonacademic
3 requirements adopted by the coordinating board under this
4 subchapter.

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

9 (1) an offense involving moral turpitude;

10 (2) an offense involving a form of sexual or physical
11 abuse of a minor or student or other illegal conduct in which the
12 victim is a minor or student;

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

18 (4) an offense involving the illegal transfer,
19 appropriation, or use of school district funds or other district
20 property; or

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

24 (c) An educator preparation program shall review the
25 background check documentation provided under Subsection (a)(7)
26 for the purposes of making a determination under Subsection (b).

27 Sec. 56.505. CONTINUING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND ACADEMIC

1 PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS. (a) After initially qualifying for a
2 scholarship under this subchapter, a person may continue to receive
3 a scholarship under the scholarship program during each semester or
4 term in which the person is enrolled at an eligible institution only
5 if the person:

6 (1) demonstrates a continued commitment to pursuing a
7 career as a classroom teacher:

8 (A) in a teaching field identified by the
9 commissioner of education as experiencing a critical shortage of
10 teachers in this state; or

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

13 (2) remains enrolled full-time in an eligible
14 institution;

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

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

22 (5) complies with any other academic or nonacademic
23 requirements adopted by the coordinating board under this
24 subchapter.

25 (b) A person is not eligible to continue to receive a
26 scholarship under the scholarship program if the person has been
27 convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense described by Section

1 56.504(b).

2 (c) If a person fails to meet any of the requirements of
3 Subsection (a) after the completion of any semester or term, the
4 person may not receive a scholarship under this subchapter during
5 the next semester or term in which the person enrolls. A person may
6 become eligible to receive a scholarship under this subchapter in a
7 subsequent semester or term if the person:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (e) A person who is eligible to receive a scholarship under
25 this subchapter continues to remain eligible to receive the
26 scholarship if the person enrolls in or transfers to an eligible
27 educator preparation program at another eligible institution.

1 (f) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to allow a
2 person who is otherwise eligible to receive a scholarship under
3 this subchapter, in the event of a hardship or for other good cause
4 shown, including a showing of a severe illness or other
5 debilitating condition that may affect the person's academic
6 performance or that the person is responsible for the care of a
7 sick, injured, or needy person and that the person's provision of
8 care may affect the person's academic performance, to receive a
9 scholarship under this subchapter:

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

13 (2) if the person's grade point average or completion
14 rate falls below the satisfactory academic progress requirements of
15 Subsection (d).

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

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

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

23 Sec. 56.506. SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT. (a) Beginning with the
24 2024-2025 academic year, the amount of a scholarship under this
25 subchapter is equal to the amount of the scholarship for the
26 preceding academic year, adjusted for inflation using the college
27 tuition and fees index component of the consumer price index

1 produced by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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

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

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

11 Sec. 56.507. SCHOLARSHIP USE. A person receiving a
12 scholarship under this subchapter may use the money to pay any usual
13 and customary cost of attendance at an eligible institution
14 incurred by the person. The institution may disburse all or part of
15 the proceeds of a scholarship under this subchapter to an eligible
16 person only if the tuition and required fees incurred by the person
17 at the institution have been paid.

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

20 (1) establish eligibility criteria for educator
21 preparation programs in accordance with Section 56.503 and for
22 scholarship recipients in accordance with Sections 56.504 and
23 56.505;

24 (2) establish procedures for the application process
25 and for selecting scholarship recipients from among eligible
26 applicants; and

27 (3) administer the scholarship program.

1 (b) In establishing criteria for eligible educator
2 preparation programs under Section 56.503, the coordinating board
3 shall consult with the State Board for Educator Certification. The
4 coordinating board shall consider the standards used by the State
5 Board for Educator Certification in identifying effective,
6 high-quality educator preparation programs grounded in
7 evidence-based best practices and, to the maximum extent possible,
8 align the eligibility criteria to those standards.

9 (c) In establishing criteria for eligible persons under
10 Sections 56.504 and 56.505, the coordinating board shall consult
11 with representatives of the educator preparation programs from
12 eligible institutions.

13 (d) In developing rules related to distributing a
14 scholarship, the coordinating board shall consult with financial
15 aid coordinators of eligible institutions.

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

19 (f) From money appropriated by the legislature for the
20 purposes of this subchapter, the coordinating board annually shall
21 determine the allocation of money available for scholarships among
22 eligible institutions and shall distribute the money accordingly.

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

26 (1) persons who demonstrate the greatest financial
27 need and whose expected family contribution, as determined

1 according to the methodology used for federal student financial
2 aid, does not exceed 60 percent of the average statewide amount of
3 tuition and required fees;

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

6 (3) persons who demonstrate a commitment both to
7 entering a teaching field identified by the commissioner of
8 education as experiencing a critical shortage of teachers and to
9 teaching in a public school in this state in which a majority of
10 students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged.

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

13 (b) Each school district shall:

14 (1) notify its middle school students, junior high
15 school students, and high school students, those students' teachers
16 and school counselors, and those students' parents of the TEXAS
17 grant, ~~and~~ Teach for Texas grant, and Future Texas Teachers
18 Scholarship programs, the eligibility requirements of each
19 program, the need for students to make informed curriculum choices
20 to be prepared for success beyond high school, and sources of
21 information on higher education admissions and financial aid in a
22 manner that assists the district in implementing a strategy adopted
23 by the district under Section 11.252(a)(4); and

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

27 (A) the recommended or advanced high school

1 curriculum required for grant eligibility under Section 28.002 or
2 28.025; or

3 (B) for a school district covered by Section
4 56.304(f)(1), the required portion of the recommended or advanced
5 high school curriculum in the manner described by Section
6 56.304(f)(2).

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

11 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
12 begin awarding scholarships under Subchapter S, Chapter 56,
13 Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2023-2024
14 academic year.

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

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 4363 was passed by the House on May 2, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 108, Nays 34, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 4363 on May 25, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 119, Nays 19, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 4363 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 21, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 25, Nays 6.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor