

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Opportunity High School Diploma program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 130, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter O to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER O. OPPORTUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

Sec. 130.451. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

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

(2) "General academic teaching institution" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(3) "Program," unless the context indicates otherwise, means the Opportunity High School Diploma program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 130.452. PURPOSE. The purpose of the program is to provide an alternative means by which adult students enrolled in a workforce education program at a public junior college may earn a high school diploma at the college through concurrent enrollment in a competency-based education program that enables students to demonstrate knowledge substantially equivalent to the knowledge required to earn a high school diploma in this state.

Sec. 130.453. ADMINISTRATION. The coordinating board shall administer the program in consultation with the Texas Education

1 Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission.

2 Sec. 130.454. APPROVAL OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
3 PROGRAM. (a) A public junior college may submit to the
4 coordinating board an application to participate in the program.
5 The application must propose an alternative competency-based high
6 school diploma program to be offered for concurrent enrollment to
7 adult students without a high school diploma who are enrolled in a
8 workforce education program at the college. The proposed program
9 may include any combination of instruction, curriculum,
10 achievement, internships, or other means by which a student may
11 attain knowledge sufficient to adequately prepare the student for
12 postsecondary education or additional workforce education.

13 (b) A public junior college may submit an application under
14 Subsection (a) together with one or more public junior colleges,
15 general academic teaching institutions, public school districts,
16 or nonprofit organizations with whom the proposed program described
17 by that subsection will be offered as provided by Subsection (e).

18 (c) The coordinating board may approve not more than five
19 public junior colleges to participate in the program.

20 (d) Subject to Subsection (c), the coordinating board shall
21 review and approve a public junior college's application to
22 participate in the program if the board determines that the
23 college's proposed program described by Subsection (a) will provide
24 instruction and assessments appropriate to ensure that a student
25 who successfully completes the proposed program demonstrates
26 levels of knowledge sufficient to adequately prepare the student
27 for postsecondary education or additional workforce education. The

1 coordinating board may coordinate with the Texas Education Agency
2 as necessary to make a determination under this subsection.

3 (e) A public junior college approved to participate in the
4 program may:

5 (1) enter into an agreement with one or more public
6 junior colleges, general academic teaching institutions, public
7 school districts, or nonprofit organizations to offer the program
8 described by Subsection (a); and

9 (2) offer the program described by Subsection (a) at
10 any campus of the college or an entity with which the college has
11 entered into an agreement under Subdivision (1).

12 Sec. 130.455. AWARD OF HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. (a) A public
13 junior college participating in the program may award a high school
14 diploma to a student enrolled in the alternative competency-based
15 high school diploma program offered by the college under the
16 program if the student performs satisfactorily on assessment
17 instruments prescribed by coordinating board rule.

18 (b) A high school diploma awarded under the program is
19 equivalent to a high school diploma awarded under Section 28.025.

20 Sec. 130.456. FUNDING. (a) The coordinating board and the
21 Texas Workforce Commission shall coordinate to jointly identify
22 funding mechanisms, including grants, interagency contracts,
23 financial aid, or subsidies, available to public junior colleges
24 and students to encourage and facilitate participation in the
25 program.

26 (b) A public junior college participating in the program is
27 entitled to receive funding under Section 130.003 for the program

1 in the manner provided by coordinating board rule.

2 Sec. 130.457. REPORT. Not later than December 1, 2026, the
3 coordinating board shall submit to the legislature a progress
4 report on the effectiveness of the program and any recommendations
5 for legislative or other action. This section expires
6 September 1, 2027.

7 Sec. 130.458. RULES. The coordinating board may adopt
8 rules as necessary to implement this subchapter.

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

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2139 passed the Senate on April 20, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0; and that the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 19, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 2139 passed the House, with amendment, on May 17, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 3, one present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor