

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4893  
By: Bowers  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Breakthrough Program is a nonprofit organization that is designed to support students aspiring to be the first in their family to graduate with a degree or certificate and those from low-income families. The bill author has informed the committee that as Texas works to improve educational outcomes and workforce readiness, many students who would be the first in their families to pursue postsecondary education face unique challenges in navigating the complex processes of college applications, financial aid, and career planning; these students often lack access to resources and guidance that would help them successfully transition from high school to postsecondary education. C.S.H.B. 4893 seeks to remedy this issue by establishing the Breakthrough Program through which the Texas Education Agency must collaborate with a nonprofit organization to provide postsecondary advising to students who are the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary certificate or degree or who are educationally disadvantaged.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4893 amends the Education Code to require the commissioner of education to establish the Breakthrough program through which the Texas Education Agency (TEA) must collaborate with a nonprofit organization to provide postsecondary advising to students who are the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary certificate or degree or who are educationally disadvantaged. The bill requires the commissioner of education to take the following actions:

- coordinate the efforts of the program with social service organizations and agencies and public school personnel to provide services to students who are at risk of not completing critical steps to graduate from high school and pursue postsecondary education and career opportunities after high school graduation;
- establish performance goals, objectives, and measures for the program, including performance goals, objectives, and measures for the improvement of student:
  - academic achievement;
  - promotion, graduation, and retention; and
  - enrollment in postsecondary education;
- evaluate progress toward those performance goals, objectives, and measures;
- assist communities that seek to participate in the program establish a local funding base for a local program;

- provide training and technical assistance for participating communities and local programs; and
- by rule adopt policies concerning:
  - TEA's responsibility in encouraging local businesses to participate in the program;
  - TEA's responsibility in obtaining information from local programs; and
  - other aspects of the program the commissioner determines appropriate.

The bill requires TEA to support the development and implementation of local programs under the program.

C.S.H.B. 4893 requires each local program to develop a funding plan that ensures that the level of services for the local program would be maintained if state funding for the local program is reduced and authorizes a local program to accept federal money, state money, donations, and grants for the local program.

C.S.H.B. 4893 requires TEA to perform each function concerning the program for which TEA is responsible and prohibits TEA from contracting through that office with a private entity to perform such a function.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2025.

### **COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 4893 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the introduced established the Breakthrough as a postsecondary advising program that supports students who are the first in their families to pursue and attain a postsecondary certificate or diploma or students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the substitute does not. The substitute instead requires the commissioner to establish the Breakthrough program through which TEA must collaborate with a nonprofit organization to provide postsecondary advising to students who are the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary certificate or degree or who are educationally disadvantaged.

While both the introduced and the substitute require the commissioner to take certain actions the introduced and substitute differ as follows:

- whereas the introduced required the commissioner to support the Breakthrough program to establish performance goals, objectives, and measures, the substitute requires the commissioner to establish such goals, objectives, and measures;
- whereas the introduced required the commissioner to obtain information to determine accomplishment of performance goals, objectives, and measures, the substitute requires the commissioner to evaluate progress toward those goals, objectives, and measures;
- the substitute specifies that the commissioner must assist communities that seek to participate in the program to establish a local funding base for a local program, whereas the introduced did not;
- whereas the introduced required the commissioner to provide training and technical assistance for participating communities and programs, the substitute requires the commissioner to provide training and technical assistance to participating communities and local programs;
- whereas the introduced required the commissioner to adopt certain policies regarding TEA's responsibilities and other aspects of the program, the substitute requires the commissioner to by rule adopt and annually update those policies;

- with respect to those policies, whereas the introduced specified obtaining information from participating programs, the substitute specifies that the policy concerns TEA's responsibility in obtaining information from local programs;
- whereas the introduced authorized a local Breakthrough program to accept federal funds, state funds, private contributions, grants, and public and school district funds to support the program, the substitute authorizes a local program to accept federal money, state money, donations, and grants for the local program; and
- the substitute does not include the specification, as in the introduced, that TEA must perform each function concerning the program for which TEA is responsible and may not contract with a private entity to perform such a function through the Breakthrough State Office.

Additionally, the substitute omits provisions that appeared in the introduced that did the following:

- required the commissioner to adopt rules to implement certain policies and to annually update the rules; and
- required TEA and Breakthrough to work together to maximize the effectiveness of the Breakthrough program.