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et al.

H.B. No. 2081

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Building Better Futures Program to support educational and occupational skills training opportunities and support services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at public and private institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter J-2 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J-2. BUILDING BETTER FUTURES PROGRAM

Sec. 61.571. PROGRAM PURPOSE. The purpose of the Building Better Futures Program is to facilitate the delivery by institutions of higher education and private or independent institutions of higher education of educational and occupational skills training opportunities and support services to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an inclusive and age-appropriate environment.

Sec. 61.572. ADMINISTRATION; RULES. (a) The board shall administer the Building Better Futures Program and adopt any rules necessary to implement the program or this subchapter.

(b) The board may develop a competitive application process for the award of funds to eligible institutions under the program.

(c) A program or course offered under the Building Better Futures Program is exempt from the requirements of Sections 61.0512

1 and 61.822.

2 Sec. 61.573. INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY. (a) To be eligible  
3 to participate in the Building Better Futures Program, an  
4 institution of higher education or private or independent  
5 institution of higher education must:

6 (1) be approved by or awaiting approval from the  
7 United States Department of Education to offer a comprehensive  
8 transition and postsecondary program for students with  
9 intellectual or developmental disabilities;

10 (2) develop and implement a selective admissions  
11 process to select eligible students under Section 61.574 for  
12 admission to the institution's comprehensive transition and  
13 postsecondary program; and

14 (3) award a certificate to each student who  
15 successfully completes the Building Better Futures Program at the  
16 institution.

17 (b) The board shall establish criteria to ensure that each  
18 eligible institution that has requested but not yet received  
19 approval from the United States Department of Education for the  
20 institution's comprehensive transition and postsecondary program  
21 obtains that approval not later than the third anniversary of the  
22 date the institution is initially selected by the board for  
23 participation in the Building Better Futures Program.

24 Sec. 61.574. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY. (a) To be eligible to  
25 participate in the Building Better Futures Program, an applicant  
26 must:

27 (1) apply for admission to a comprehensive transition

1 and postsecondary program, or a program that is awaiting approval  
2 from the United States Department of Education as a comprehensive  
3 transition and postsecondary program, at an eligible institution;

4 (2) be a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the  
5 United States;

6 (3) subject to Subsection (d), be a resident of this  
7 state as determined under Section 54.052;

8 (4) have an intellectual or developmental disability  
9 diagnosed by a physician, psychologist, or other individual  
10 qualified by license or statute to make the diagnosis;

11 (5) be able and willing to learn and participate in an  
12 inclusive classroom and work setting; and

13 (6) not be a danger to the applicant's self or others,  
14 as determined by the accepting institution.

15 (b) An applicant who is a lawful permanent resident of the  
16 United States must submit with the applicant's application a copy  
17 of the applicant's lawful permanent resident form.

18 (c) An eligible institution may require an applicant or the  
19 applicant's parent or guardian to provide proof of residency as  
20 follows:

21 (1) information from the Free Application for Federal  
22 Student Aid;

23 (2) a current driver's license issued by the  
24 Department of Public Safety;

25 (3) documentation of payment of personal or real  
26 property taxes for the previous year;

27 (4) current vehicle registration issued by the Texas

1 Department of Motor Vehicles;

2 (5) a current voter registration certificate issued by  
3 a voter registrar of a county in this state; or

4 (6) documentation described by Section 54.053.

5 (d) An applicant who is not a resident of this state may  
6 participate in the Building Better Futures Program at an eligible  
7 institution only if the applicant is otherwise eligible under this  
8 section and the institution has an opening available in the program  
9 after all other eligible applicants are admitted.

10 Sec. 61.575. TRANSFERABILITY. Semester credit hours or the  
11 equivalent completed through the Building Better Futures Program  
12 may not be transferred to an associate or baccalaureate degree  
13 program.

14 Sec. 61.576. AWARD OF MONEY. The board may award money  
15 under the Building Better Futures Program only to eligible  
16 institutions to be used by the institutions to facilitate the  
17 delivery of educational and occupational skills training  
18 opportunities and support services to students participating in the  
19 program.

20 Sec. 61.577. FUNDING. The board may use any available  
21 revenue, including legislative appropriations, and may solicit and  
22 accept gifts, grants, and donations from a public or private source  
23 for the purposes of this subchapter.

24 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
25 shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter J-2, Chapter 61,  
26 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after  
27 the effective date of this Act.

1           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.