

By: Reynolds

H.B. No. 3296

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of a higher education consortium for civic education and a grant program for that consortium.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter Q, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER Q. CIVIC EDUCATION CONSORTIUM AND GRANT [~~TEXAS PARTNERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP~~] PROGRAM

Sec. 61.801. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "consortium" means the consortium of colleges and universities established under Section 61.802.

Sec. 61.802. CONSORTIUM. (a) A consortium of colleges and universities is established to provide civic education to residents of this state at no cost to the student.

(b) To be eligible to participate in the consortium, a college or university must:

(1) be located in this state;

(2) be designated as a historically black college or university;

(3) be accredited by a recognized accrediting agency;
and

(4) for an institution of higher education, comply with all applicable state and federal laws.

Sec. 61.803. CIVIC EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM. (a) From money

1 appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose, the board
2 shall establish a grant program under which the board awards grants
3 to colleges and universities in the consortium to provide civic
4 education to residents of this state at no cost to the student. A
5 grant awarded under the grant program may be for a one-year term or
6 for a term of more than one year.

7 (b) A college or university in the consortium that receives
8 a grant under the grant program shall partner with a municipality,
9 county, community organization, public library, institution of
10 higher education, or private or independent institution of higher
11 education to provide the civic education described by Subsection
12 (a) through existing community programs and initiatives.

13 (c) Money received under the grant program may be used only
14 for the following purposes as related to civic education described
15 by Subsection (a):

16 (1) for colleges and universities in the consortium:

17 (A) faculty and staff recruitment, development,
18 and retention;

19 (B) upgrades and support for research,
20 curriculum development and instruction, and technological
21 advancements; and

22 (C) infrastructure improvements;

23 (2) for community partners described by Subsection
24 (b):

25 (A) staffing, including training to build civic
26 education expertise;

27 (B) infrastructure and program implementation;

1 (C) the creation of digital resources and virtual
2 programming to expand accessibility; and

3 (D) support for hosting civic education events,
4 including voter registration drives and workshops;

5 (3) support services for recruitment, development,
6 and retention of students; and

7 (4) a broad framework of civic education models and
8 practices to be used as the basis for curriculum and instruction
9 statewide.

10 (d) Civic education offered under the grant program must be
11 made available across the state, with resources directed to both
12 urban and rural communities.

13 (e) The board shall require a college or university in the
14 consortium that receives a grant under the grant program to
15 regularly report the college's or university's progress in
16 providing civic education described by Subsection (a).

17 Sec. 61.804. OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. (a) The board shall
18 establish an oversight committee to monitor the consortium and
19 implementation of the grant program under Section 61.803.

20 (b) The oversight committee must consist of representatives
21 of:

22 (1) colleges and universities located in this state
23 and designated as historically black colleges and universities;

24 (2) municipalities;

25 (3) counties; and

26 (4) public libraries.

27 (c) The oversight committee shall evaluate the civic

1 education provided by the consortium under this subchapter at least
2 once every three years. The committee must consider:

3 (1) student competencies and skills growth;

4 (2) enrollment and completion rates; and

5 (3) community and economic impacts.

6 (d) The consortium shall contract with an independent
7 third-party evaluator to evaluate the civic education provided by
8 the consortium under this subchapter on the schedule described by
9 Subsection (c) and report the evaluator's findings to the oversight
10 committee and the consortium.

11 Sec. 61.805. CONSORTIUM RECOMMENDATIONS. (a) The
12 consortium may make recommendations to the oversight committee for
13 the provision of civic education under the grant program
14 established under Section 61.803. The recommendations must address
15 community needs, including state and local workforce development.

16 (b) The oversight committee must approve a recommendation
17 of the consortium before grant funding under Section 61.803 may be
18 spent in accordance with that recommendation.

19 Sec. 61.806. GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS. The board shall
20 encourage the consortium to seek gifts, grants, or donations,
21 including matching funds from federal programs, from any public or
22 private source to support civic education under this subchapter.

23 Sec. 61.807. RULES. The board may adopt rules as necessary
24 to implement this subchapter.

25 SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2025-2026
26 academic year.

27 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives

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