

By: West

S.B. No. 1401

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the Texas Mental Health Profession Pipeline Program by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.070 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.070. TEXAS MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSION PIPELINE PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "participating institution" means a public senior college or university or a private or independent institution of higher education that offers baccalaureate degree programs and postbaccalaureate degree and certificate programs.

(b) The board shall establish the Texas Mental Health Profession Pipeline Program and encourage participating institutions to develop pipeline programs for the purpose of providing a clear, guided program of study for public junior college students to transfer to a participating institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree or a postbaccalaureate degree or certificate leading to licensure and practice as:

(1) a psychologist, as defined by Section 501.002, Occupations Code;

(2) a licensed professional counselor, as defined by Section 503.002, Occupations Code;

(3) an advanced practice registered nurse, as defined by Section 301.152, Occupations Code, who holds a nationally

1 recognized board certification in psychiatric or mental health
2 nursing;

3 (4) a licensed master social worker or a licensed
4 clinical social worker, as defined by Section 505.002, Occupations
5 Code;

6 (5) a licensed specialist in school psychology, as
7 defined by Section 501.002, Occupations Code; or

8 (6) a licensed marriage and family therapist, as
9 defined by Section 502.002, Occupations Code.

10 (c) A participating institution that develops a pipeline
11 program under Subsection (b) shall:

12 (1) partner with one or more public junior colleges to
13 create a guided program of study for public junior college
14 students; and

15 (2) ensure that a public junior college student who
16 transfers to the participating institution:

17 (A) does not lose any credits earned before
18 transferring;

19 (B) can earn a baccalaureate degree in less than
20 two years following the transfer; and

21 (C) after earning a baccalaureate degree, is
22 automatically admitted to a postbaccalaureate degree or
23 certificate program at the participating institution if:

24 (i) the student meets the minimum academic
25 requirements, as determined by the participating institution; and

26 (ii) the postbaccalaureate degree or
27 certificate program has the capacity to admit new students based

1 on:

2 (a) student-to-faculty ratios
3 required by state law, federal law, the appropriate accrediting
4 organization, or institutional policy; and

5 (b) the availability of clinical
6 placements and the faculty or preceptors that supervise those
7 placements.

8 (d) The board shall designate a program of study that meets
9 the requirements of Subsection (c) as a pipeline program.

10 (e) The board shall maintain on the board's Internet website
11 information that clearly displays:

12 (1) a list of each pipeline program operating in this
13 state;

14 (2) a list of each participating institution that has
15 established a pipeline program;

16 (3) a map displaying the location of each
17 participating institution that has established a pipeline program;
18 and

19 (4) data regarding each pipeline program based on
20 information provided to the board under Subsection (f).

21 (f) Each participating institution shall submit an annual
22 report to the board that includes:

23 (1) the total number of students in the participating
24 institution's pipeline program;

25 (2) the number of students in the participating
26 institution's pipeline program who have transferred from a public
27 junior college to the participating institution without losing any

1 credits previously earned at the public junior college;

2 (3) the number of students in the participating
3 institution's pipeline program who in the preceding academic year
4 earned a baccalaureate degree from the participating institution
5 that was completed in two years or less;

6 (4) the capacity of the participating institution's
7 pipeline program to prepare more students for licensure and
8 practice as mental health professionals in the fields described by
9 Subsection (b);

10 (5) the financial resources allocated by the
11 participating institution to increase the number of students who
12 are able to complete the course of study under the participating
13 institution's pipeline program; and

14 (6) the average time for a student to complete the
15 course of study under the participating institution's pipeline
16 program from the date the student enrolls in a public junior college
17 to the date of the student's graduation from a postbaccalaureate
18 degree or certificate program.

19 (g) The board shall adopt rules consistent with this section
20 as necessary to implement this section, including rules for
21 designating pipeline programs as described by Subsection (d).

22 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
23 shall adopt rules as required by Section 61.070(g), Education Code,
24 as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective
25 date of this Act.

26 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.