

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
82R20128 JRJ-D

C.S.S.B. 1729
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
4/6/2011
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill would establish the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program for eligible students attending eligible two-year institutions.

C.S.S.B. 1729 amends current law relating to the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 2 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Subchapter GG, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER GG. TEXAS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (T-STEM) CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sec. 61.9791. DEFINITION. Defines, in this subchapter, "STEM program."

Sec. 61.9792. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish and administer, in accordance with this subchapter and THECB rules, the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program under which THECB provides a scholarship to a student who meets the eligibility criteria prescribed by Section 61.9793.

Sec. 61.9793. ELIGIBLE STUDENT. (a) Requires a student, to receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter, to:

- (1) graduate from high school with a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale in mathematics and science courses;
- (2) enroll in a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program at an eligible institution; and
- (3) agree to work no more than 15 hours a week for a business participating in the STEM program.

(b) Requires a student, to continue to qualify for a scholarship under this subchapter, to:

- (1) remain enrolled in a STEM program at an eligible institution;
- (2) maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale;

- (3) complete at least 80 percent of all semester credit hours attempted for each semester;
- (4) complete at least 30 semester credit hours per academic year; and
- (5) work no more than 15 hours a week for a business participating in the STEM program.

Sec. 61.9794. ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION. (a) Requires an institution, to qualify as an eligible institution under this subchapter, to:

- (1) be a public junior college or public technical institute;
- (2) admit at least 50 students into a STEM program each academic year; and
- (3) develop partnerships with business and industry to identify local employment needs in STEM fields, and provide part-time employment for students enrolled in a STEM program.

(b) Requires an institution, to maintain eligibility, beginning with the second year following implementation of a scholarship program under this subchapter, to demonstrate to THECB that at least 70 percent of the institution's T-STEM Challenge Scholarship graduates, within three months of graduation, are employed by a business in a STEM field, or enrolled in upper-division courses leading to a baccalaureate degree in a STEM field.

Sec. 61.9795. AMOUNT; FUNDING. (a) Requires THECB, subject to available funding, to award scholarships, with at least 50 percent of the amount awarded from private funds.

- (b) Authorizes an eligible student to receive a scholarship awarded under this subchapter for not more than two academic years.
- (c) Authorizes THECB to use any available revenue, including legislative appropriations, and to solicit and accept gifts and grants for purposes of this section.

SECTION 2. Requires THECB to award scholarships under Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year. Requires THECB to adopt the rules required by that subchapter as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2011.