

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1810
By: West
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The state of early education in large urban counties is under acute stress. High-quality early educator teacher preparation is needed to help increase the quality of education delivered to our youngest learners while concurrently increasing the number of teachers specifically trained in a county with a population greater than one million. Teacher pipelines, at both the state and regional levels, are marked by severe shortages in teacher production, with Texas colleges and universities collectively only certifying 11,200 K-12 teachers which is only 40 percent of the 27,800 beginning public school teacher positions filled across the state for the fall of 2013. S.B. 1810 will address this need by first giving regional public universities the opportunity to develop a plan to fully address the existing and contemplated workforce need in EC-6th grade certifications issued by higher education. The plan must gain the approval of 51 percent of the public school districts in the county, and once approved must be successfully implemented within a two-year time frame such that students enrolled in teacher preparation programs will be able to fully address the shortfall. Should the plan either not be approved or not be successfully implemented, the county community college system would then be given the right to offer early childhood education baccalaureate degrees to add to area teacher pipelines using a curriculum approved by 51 percent of public school districts in the county.

As proposed, S.B. 1810 amends current law relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer early childhood education baccalaureate degree programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 130.0012, Education Code, by adding Subsections (b-1), (b-2), and (g-1) and amending Subsection (g), as follows:

(b-1) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to authorize a baccalaureate degree program in early childhood education at each public junior college located in a county with a population of greater than one million if:

(1) the county has a demonstrated initial need for at least 3,000 early childhood educators;

(2) the degree program curriculum is approved by the independent school districts located in the county that collectively represent at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade; and

(3) one of the following:

(A) before November 1, 2015, a regional public university located in the county or an immediately adjacent county is unable to obtain the approval of the independent school districts located in the county that collectively represent at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade for a detailed plan to:

(i) expand degree output of early childhood and elementary certified teachers to collectively meet the three-year average hiring demands of the independent school districts located in the county and immediately adjacent counties, including producing more prekindergarten teachers to support the planned increases in prekindergarten enrollment for all public schools;

(ii) implement an early childhood education curriculum; and

(iii) fund the expansion of current or development of new early childhood education programs, which does not include state funding for new facilities; or

(B) before September 1, 2017, a regional public university that received the approval of independent school districts as described by Paragraph (A) is unable to demonstrate:

(i) the necessary current student enrollment to produce sufficient early childhood and elementary certified teachers within the next four years to meet the existing hiring demands of the independent school districts located in the county and immediately adjacent counties based on historical three-year averages, including producing more prekindergarten teachers to support the planned increases in prekindergarten enrollment for all public schools; and

(ii) implementation of an early childhood education curriculum meeting the expressed needs of the independent school districts located in the county that collectively represent at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade.

(b-2) Prohibits THECB from subsequently terminating authorization to offer an early childhood baccalaureate degree program granted under Subsection (b-1) on the ground that implementation of the degree program reduces the workforce need to a level that is below the minimal threshold specified in Subsection (b-1)(1).

(g) Requires THECB to recommend that a public junior college receive substantially the same state support for junior-level and senior-level courses offered under this section as that provided to a general academic teaching institution for substantially similar courses, except as provided by Subsection (g-1), in its recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for public junior colleges.

(g-1) Authorizes a degree program created under Subsection (b-1) to be funded only by a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003, local funds, and private sources. Provides that this subsection does not require the legislature to appropriate state funds to support a degree program created under Subsection (b-1).

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.