

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1926

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

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

SECTION 1. Section 130.0012, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a), (d), (e), and (g) and adding Subsections (b-4), (b-5), (e-1), and (g-1) to read as follows:

(a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may ~~[shall]~~ authorize public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science, ~~[and]~~ applied technology, and nursing under this section. Offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college.

(b-4) The coordinating board shall establish a pilot project to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of authorizing a baccalaureate degree program in the field of nursing to be offered by the South Texas Community College District if it has demonstrated a workforce need.

(b-5) Not later than January 1, 2019, the coordinating board shall prepare a progress report on the pilot project established under Subsection (b-4). Not later than January 1, 2021, the coordinating board shall prepare a report on the effectiveness of the pilot project, including any recommendations for legislative

1 action regarding the offering of baccalaureate degree programs in
2 the field of nursing by a public junior college. The coordinating
3 board shall deliver a copy of each report to the governor, the
4 lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives,
5 and the chair of the standing committee of each house of the
6 legislature with primary jurisdiction over higher education.
7 Unless the authority to continue offering a baccalaureate degree
8 program in the field of nursing is continued by the legislature, a
9 public junior college may not:

10 (1) enroll a new student in a baccalaureate degree
11 program under the pilot project after the 2022 fall semester;

12 (2) offer junior-level or senior-level courses for
13 those degree programs after the 2025 fall semester, unless the
14 coordinating board authorizes the college to offer those courses;
15 or

16 (3) award a baccalaureate degree under the pilot
17 project after the 2025 fall semester, unless the coordinating board
18 approves the awarding of the degree.

19 (d) A public junior college offering a baccalaureate degree
20 program under this section may not offer more than six ~~[five]~~
21 baccalaureate degree programs at any time. The degree programs are
22 subject to the continuing approval of the coordinating board.

23 (e) In determining whether a public junior college may offer
24 ~~[what]~~ baccalaureate degree programs and what degree programs may
25 ~~[are to]~~ be offered, the coordinating board shall:

26 (1) apply the same criteria and standards the
27 coordinating board uses to approve baccalaureate degree programs at

1 general academic teaching institutions; and

2 (2) consider the following factors:

3 (A) [~~(1)~~] the workforce need for the degree
4 programs in the region served by the junior college;

5 (B) [~~(2)~~] how those degree programs would
6 complement the other programs and course offerings of the junior
7 college and whether the associate degree program offered by the
8 junior college in the same field has been successful;

9 (C) [~~(3)~~] whether those degree programs would
10 unnecessarily duplicate the degree programs offered by other
11 institutions of higher education; and

12 (D) [~~(4)~~] the ability of the junior college to
13 support the degree programs with student enrollment [~~program~~] and
14 the adequacy of the junior college's facilities, faculty,
15 administration, libraries, and other resources.

16 (e-1) A public junior college may offer a baccalaureate
17 degree program under this section only if its junior college
18 district meets the taxable property valuation amount established in
19 Section 130.032.

20 (g) Except as provided by Subsection (g-1), in [~~In~~] its
21 recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for
22 public junior colleges, the coordinating board shall recommend that
23 a public junior college receive substantially the same state
24 support for junior-level and senior-level courses offered under
25 this section as that provided to a general academic teaching
26 institution for substantially similar courses. In determining the
27 contact hours attributable to students enrolled in a junior-level

or senior-level course offered under this section used to determine a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003, the coordinating board shall weigh those contact hours as necessary to provide the junior college the appropriate level of state support to the extent state funds for those courses are included in the appropriations. This subsection does not prohibit the legislature from directly appropriating state funds to support junior-level and senior-level courses offered under this section.

(g-1) For the first two years in which a degree program created under Subsection (b-4) is offered, the degree program may be funded solely by a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003, local funds, and private sources. This subsection does not require the legislature to appropriate state funds to support a degree program under Subsection (b-4).

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2017.