

By: Hernandez

H.B. No. 494

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the institutions of higher education eligible to participate in the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program.

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

SECTION 1. Section 61.9792, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.9792. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. The board shall establish and administer, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Challenge Scholarship program under which the board provides a grant to an eligible institution for the purpose of providing a scholarship to a student who meets the eligibility criteria prescribed by Section 61.9793.

SECTION 2. Section 61.9794, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

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

(1) be one of the following:

(A) a public junior college, public junior college district, or public technical institute that admits ~~+~~

~~[(2) admit]~~ at least 50 students into a STEM program each academic year; or

(B) a general academic teaching institution that

admits into a STEM program each academic year eligible students
who:

(i) previously participated in a T-STEM
Challenge Scholarship program at a public junior college or public
technical institute; and

(ii) completed at least 45 semester credit
hours at the college or institute before enrolling in the general
academic teaching institution; and

(2) [~~(3)~~] develop partnerships with business and
industry to:

(A) identify local employment needs in Science,
Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields; and

(B) provide part-time employment for students
enrolled in a STEM program.

(b) To maintain eligibility, beginning with the second year
following implementation of a scholarship program under this
subchapter, an institution must demonstrate to the board that at
least 70 percent of the institution's T-STEM Challenge Scholarship
graduates, within six [~~three~~] months after graduation, are:

(1) employed by a business in a Science, Technology,
Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field; or

(2) enrolled in upper-division courses leading to a
baccalaureate degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and
Mathematics (STEM) field.

SECTION 3. Section [61.9795](#), Education Code, is amended to
read as follows:

Sec. 61.9795. AMOUNT; FUNDING. (a) Subject to available

1 funding, the board shall award a grant to an eligible institution
2 for the purpose of providing scholarships, with at least 50 percent
3 of the amount awarded from private funds.

4 (b) Except as provided by Subsection (b-1), an ~~[An]~~ eligible
5 student may receive a scholarship awarded under this subchapter for
6 not more than two academic years.

7 (b-1) A student who previously participated in the T-STEM
8 Challenge Scholarship program at a public junior college or public
9 technical institute and completed at least 45 semester credit hours
10 at the college or institute, who then enrolls in a general academic
11 teaching institution, may receive a scholarship awarded under this
12 subchapter for two additional academic years. The student must
13 meet the eligibility requirements established under Section
14 [61.9793](#).

15 (c) The board may use any available revenue, including
16 legislative appropriations, and may solicit and accept gifts and
17 grants for purposes of this subchapter.

18 SECTION 4. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
19 shall award scholarships under Subchapter GG, Chapter 61, Education
20 Code, as amended by this Act, beginning with the 2015-2016 academic
21 year. The coordinating board shall adopt the rules required by that
22 subchapter as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

23 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.