

By: Giddings

H.B. No. 971

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

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

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

SECTION 1. Section 130.0012, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (b-4), (b-5), (b-6), and (g-1) and amending Subsection (g) to read as follows:

(b-4) The coordinating board shall authorize a baccalaureate degree program in early childhood education at each public junior college located in a county with a population of 2.2 million or more and adjacent to a county with a population of more than 600,000 if:

(1) the county in which the public junior college is located has a demonstrated initial need for at least 2,400 early childhood educators based on the number of unserved children eligible for public early childhood education, assuming, only for purposes of calculating the need, a student to teacher ratio of 12 to 1;

(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:

1                   (A) before November 1, 2017, a regional public  
2 university located in the county in which the public junior college  
3 is located or an immediately adjacent county is unable to obtain the  
4 approval of the independent school districts located in the county  
5 in which the public junior college is located that collectively  
6 represent at least 51 percent of the student population enrolled in  
7 kindergarten through 12th grade for a detailed plan to:

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

15                   (ii) implement an early childhood education  
16 curriculum; and

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

20                   (B) before September 1, 2019, a regional public  
21 university that received the approval of independent school  
22 districts as described by Paragraph (A) is unable to demonstrate:

23                   (i) the necessary current student  
24 enrollment to produce sufficient early childhood and elementary  
25 certified teachers within the next four years to meet the existing  
26 hiring demands of the independent school districts located in the  
27 county in which the public junior college is located and

1 immediately adjacent counties based on historical three-year  
2 averages, including producing more prekindergarten teachers to  
3 support the planned increases in prekindergarten enrollment for all  
4 public schools; and

5 (ii) implementation of an early childhood  
6 education curriculum meeting the expressed needs of the independent  
7 school districts located in the county in which the public junior  
8 college is located that collectively represent at least 51 percent  
9 of the student population enrolled in kindergarten through 12th  
10 grade.

11 (b-5) A degree program created under Subsection (b-4) may  
12 not be authorized by the State Board for Educator Certification  
13 under Chapter 21 for a certification field above the third grade  
14 level.

15 (b-6) The coordinating board may not subsequently terminate  
16 authorization to offer an early childhood baccalaureate degree  
17 program granted under Subsection (b-4) on the ground that  
18 implementation of the degree program reduces the workforce need to  
19 a level that is below the minimal threshold specified in Subsection  
20 (b-4)(1).

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

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

11 (g-1) A degree program created under Subsection (b-4) may be  
12 funded only by a public junior college's proportionate share of  
13 state appropriations under Section 130.003, local funds, and  
14 private sources. This subsection does not require the legislature  
15 to appropriate state funds to support a degree program created  
16 under Subsection (b-4).

17 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.