

SUBJECT: Creating the Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Kuempel, Paul, Burns, Clardy, Cole, M. González, Howard, Lalani, Raney

0 nays

2 absent — Bucy, Burrows

WITNESSES: For — JoLisa Hoover, Raise Your Hand Texas (*Registered, but did not testify*); Tricia Cave, Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE); Travis Krogman, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Shari Albright, Charles Butt Foundation; Joanna Warren, Educate Texas; Jaime Puente, Every Texan; Lesley Rivas, Mexican American School Boards Association; Stacy Schmitt, Gilbert Zavala, Opportunity Austin; Rebekah Calahan, Philanthropy Advocates; Alejandro Pena, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Raif Calvert, Texas Association of School Boards; Pamela McPeters, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association; Ashley Ford, The Arc of Texas; Christina Destefano)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that a scholarship program to support teacher preparation and university-based programming could help with teacher retention and retainment.

DIGEST: CSHB 4363 would establish the Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program with the purpose of recruiting, preparing, and retaining a talented and diverse workforce of career teachers to be leaders in their field and providing assistance for tuition, mandatory fees, and other usual and customary costs of attendance at an eligible institution.

To be eligible to participate in the scholarship program, an educator preparation program would have to:

- be operated by an eligible institution;
- provide a structured system of support to assist scholarship recipients to successfully complete the program;
- require additional hours of field-based experience for students above the minimum required hours;
- require additional hours of clinical teaching experience for students above the minimum required hours;
- provide or facilitate opportunities for scholarship recipients to participate in learning opportunities beyond the university classroom setting; and
- comply with other eligibility criteria.

To be eligible initially for a scholarship under the program, a person would have to:

- be a Texas resident enrolled full-time in an eligible institution or have applied for admission to an eligible institution and enroll full-time in that institution in the following academic year;
- be working toward a baccalaureate or master's degree and be on track to be admitted to an eligible educator program;
- demonstrate a commitment to pursuing a teaching career in a public school that was identified to be experiencing a critical shortage of teachers or a public school in which a majority of students were educationally disadvantaged;
- comply with financial aid requirements for high school graduation;
- comply with any other requirements.

Certain offenses related to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession would disqualify a person from receiving a scholarship from the program.

A person would have to maintain compliance with certain eligibility

requirements to continue qualifying for a scholarship. A person who was eligible to receive a scholarship would continue to remain eligible if the person enrolled in or transferred to an eligible educator preparation program at another eligible institution. If a person failed to meet eligibility requirements and therefore did not receive a scholarship during the next semester or term, they could again become eligible to receive a scholarship by following certain eligibility requirements.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) would be required to adopt rules to allow a person who was otherwise eligible to receive a scholarship in the event certain hardship or other good cause to receive a scholarship under certain conditions.

A person's eligibility for a scholarship would end on the earlier of:

- the fourth anniversary of the initial award of a scholarship to the person and the person's enrollment in an eligible institution; or
- the person's completion of the baccalaureate or master's degree program.

For the 2023-24 academic year, the scholarship would be \$12,000. Beginning with the 2024-25 academic year, the amount of a scholarship would be equal to the amount of the scholarship for the preceding year, adjusted for inflation.

The bill would include relevant definitions, details about scholarship disbursement, and administration procedures. The bill would add the program to those of which school districts were required to notify certain students, parents, and personnel.

THECB would be required to adopt rules to administer the bill as soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill. THECB would begin awarding scholarships beginning with the 2023-24 academic year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take

effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to estimates by the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications of the bill can not be determined due to the unavailability of data related to the number of educator preparations programs that would participate in the program and the number of scholarships that would be awarded.