SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

Passed by the House on May 9, 2013: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting; the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 2201 on May 23, 2013; Yeas 146, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting; passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 21, 2013: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Approved June 10, 2013.

Effective September 1, 2013.

CHAPTER 215

H.B. No. 3662

AN ACT relating to the Texas Workforce Innovation Needs Program; authorizing a fee.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 29.922 to read as follows:

Sec. 29.922. TEXAS WORKFORCE INNOVATION NEEDS PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) “Private or independent institution of higher education” has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) “Program” means the Texas Workforce Innovation Needs Program.

(b) The Texas Workforce Innovation Needs Program is established to:

(1) provide selected school districts, public institutions of higher education, and private or independent institutions of higher education with the opportunity to establish innovative programs designed to prepare students for careers for which there is demand in this state; and

(2) use the results of those programs to inform the governor, legislature, and commissioner concerning methods for transforming public education and higher education in this state by improving student learning and career preparedness.

(c) To apply to participate in the program, a school district, public institution of higher education, or private or independent institution of higher education must use the form and apply in the time and manner established by commissioner rule. The application process must require each applicant district or institution of higher education to submit a detailed plan as required by Subsections (d) and (e) of the instruction and accountability the applicant would provide under the program.

(d) A plan submitted under Subsection (c):

(1) must:

(A) be designed to support improved instruction of and learning by students and provide evidence of the accurate assessment of the quality of learning on campus;

(B) describe any waiver of an applicable prohibition, requirement, or restriction for which the district or institution of higher education intends to apply; and

(C) include any other information required by commissioner rule; and

(2) may, if submitted by a school district, designate one or more campuses rather than the entire district to participate in the program.

(e) In addition to satisfying the requirements under Subsection (d)(1), a plan submitted under Subsection (c) must, to the greatest extent appropriate for the grade or higher education levels served under the program, either:

(1) focus on engagement of students in competency-based learning as necessary to earn postsecondary credentials, including:
(A) career and technical certificates;
(B) associate’s degrees;
(C) bachelor’s degrees; and
(D) graduate degrees; or
(2) incorporate career and technical courses into dual enrollment courses or into the early college education program under Section 29.908 to provide students the opportunity to earn a career or technical certificate or associate’s degree.

(f) From among the school districts and institutions of higher education that apply as required under this section, the commissioner shall select those school districts and institutions of higher education that present the plans that are most likely to be effective in producing the next generation of higher performing public schools and institutions of higher education that provide education and training in an innovative form and manner to prepare students for careers for which there is demand in this state.

(g) The commissioner shall convene program leaders periodically to discuss methods to transform learning opportunities for all students, build cross-institution support systems and training, and share best practices tools and processes.

(h) A school district or institution of higher education participating in the program or the commissioner may, for purposes of this section, accept gifts, grants, or donations from any source, including a private or governmental entity.

(i) To cover the costs of administering the program, the commissioner may charge a fee to a school district or institution of higher education participating in the program.

(j) In consultation with interested school districts, institutions of higher education, and other appropriate interested persons, the commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary for purposes of this section.

(k) Not later than December 1, 2014, and not later than December 1, 2016, with the assistance of school districts and institutions of higher education participating in the program, the commissioner shall submit to the governor and the legislature reports concerning the performance and progress of the program participants. The report submitted not later than December 1, 2014, must include any recommendation by the commissioner concerning legislative authority necessary for the commissioner to waive a prohibition, requirement, or restriction that applies to a program participant and other school district or institution of higher education interested in beginning a similar program. To prepare for implementation of a commissioner waiver, the commissioner shall seek any necessary federal waiver. This subsection expires January 1, 2020.

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, 2013.

Passed by the House on May 2, 2013: Yeas 147, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting; passed by the Senate on May 22, 2013: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Approved June 10, 2013.

Effective June 10, 2013.

CHAPTER 216

S.B. No. 441

AN ACT
relating to the establishment of the Texas Fast Start Program to promote rapid delivery of workforce education and development.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Section 302.0032 to read as follows: