

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1449
By: West
Higher Education
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As Filed

DIGEST

The recodification of the Education Code occurred with the passage of S.B. 1, in 1995, which placed the total state funds delivered to a school district as a “driver” to increase the state salary schedule. This change was an effort to achieve proportionality to state salary adjustments and the totally flow of state funds to school districts. However, a large majority of school districts used local labor markets to drive the establishment of wage schedules. S.B. 1449 would establish programs to assist university students to become public school teachers, to provide loan repayment assistance to certain classroom teachers, and to provide funding for certain teacher certification program.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1449 establishes programs to assist university students to become public school teachers, to provide loan repayment assistance to certain classroom teachers, and to provide funding for certain teacher certification program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Sections 61.955 and 61.957, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Subchapter W, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER W. TEXAS TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Sec. 61.951. DEFINITIONS. Defines “eligible institution.”

Sec. 61.952. PURPOSE. Provides that the purpose of this subchapter is to enhance and coordinate the efforts of this state through public and private institutions of higher education to develop and maintain an adequate, effective, classroom teacher workforce by establishing certain provisions.

Sec. 61.953. FORMULA FUNDING FOR CERTIFICATION INITIATIVES. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to include funding for a planned initiative to expand or develop certain teacher certification programs, in establishing formulas required by Section 61.059, in order to ensure certain availability of adequate funding for the initiative, if certain conditions have been met.

Sec. 61.954. TEXAS TEACHER CONDITIONAL GRANT PROGRAM. Requires THECB to establish a program to provide conditional grants, to be known as Texas Teacher grants, to eligible persons who enter a teacher preparation program at an eligible institution and agree to teach in the public schools of this state. Sets forth requirements a person must meet in order to apply to receive a Texas Teacher grant. Sets forth the amount of the grant per semester as determined by THECB. Requires a person to begin fulfilling the teaching obligation not later than the 18th month after the person begins the degree program and obtains teacher certification, unless additional time is granted by THECB. Provides that the period within which the teacher must complete the teaching obligation is six years after the date of beginning to fulfill the obligation. Requires THECB to grant a person additional time to complete the obligation for good cause. Provides conditions by which the board shall cancel a person’s teaching obligation. Requires

THECB to require a person who receives a grant to sign a promissory note acknowledging the conditional nature of the grant and promising to repay the amount of the grant plus applicable interest and reasonable collection costs if the person does not satisfy applicable conditions. Requires THECB to determine the terms of the promissory note. Provides that a person who does not fulfill their obligations shall repay an amount determined in proportion to the portion of the teaching obligation that the person has satisfied. Sets forth conditions by which a grant becomes a loan for a person considered to have failed to satisfy the conditions of the grant.

Sec. 61.955. TEXASTEACHER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM. Requires THECB to provide assistance in the repayment of student loans for classroom teachers who apply and qualify for the assistance. Sets forth requirements for a person to be eligible to receive loan repayment assistance. Authorizes THECB by rule to provide for loan repayment assistance on a pro rata basis for a person employed as a part-time classroom teacher. Prohibits a person from receiving loan repayment assistance for more than five years. Authorizes a teacher to receive loan repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for education at a public or private institution of higher education in or outside of the state received by the person from any lender. Prohibits THECB from providing loan repayment assistance for a student loan that is in default at the time of the person's application. Sets forth the requirements, in a written agreement between the person and THECB, concerning qualification for loan repayment assistance. Establishes that a person is eligible for loan repayment assistance in an amount equal to 10 percent of the person's outstanding loans, but not to exceed \$2,000, for every full school year the person serves as a classroom teacher as well as satisfying other conditions of the agreement. Requires THECB to pay the person in a manner determined by THECB. Requires THECB to provide the assistance in a manner that ensures that the board is authorized to recover any amount of assistance paid to the person before the person completes a full school year as a classroom teacher as required by the agreement. Authorizes THECB to enter into an agreement to provide certain conditional loan repayment assistance as it becomes available. Requires the board to select persons to receive payment assistance, if money is available, on any basis the board considers reasonable to further the purpose of this subchapter. Authorizes THECB to grant partial loan assistance to, for good cause, the portion of the school year the person actually teaches.

Sec. 61.956. ADVISORY COMMITTEES. Authorizes THECB to appoint advisory committees to assist THECB in performing its duties.

Sec. 61.957. RULES; DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION. Requires THECB to adopt rules necessary for the administration of this subchapter. Requires THECB to distribute a copy of the rules and pertinent information relating to the programs established by this subchapter to certain institutions and associations.

Sec. 61.958. FUNDING. Authorizes THECB to accept gifts and grants from any public or private source, as well as authorizing the legislature to appropriate money for the purposes of this subchapter.

SECTION 2. (a) Effective date: September 1, 1999.

(b) Requires THECB to begin providing the Texas Teacher grants as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, and subject to available funding.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.