

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
7R15481 KEL-D

C.S.H.B. 400
By: Giddings (Van de Putte)
Education
5/8/2001
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Individual public institutions of higher education independently distribute pertinent information to prospective students to ensure that the students and their parents understand the benefits of higher education and the necessary steps to prepare for college. However, current law does not provide for a public program to distribute such information, which may help increase the admission and enrollment of students in Texas institutions of higher education. There is also no current statewide partnership program that identifies high schools and districts with low rates of college-bound students. C.S.H.B. 400 creates the Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program to provide prospective students with assistance and information on admissions and enrollment at institutions of higher education and creates a plan to increase enrollment at institutions of higher education through partnerships between school districts and public institutions of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 29Z, Education Code, by adding Section 29.903, as follows:

Sec. 29.903. PLAN TO INCREASE ENROLLMENT IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) Sets forth the school districts to which this section applies.

(b) Requires the Texas Education Agency (agency) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (board) to collaborate in identifying each school district to which this section applies. Sets forth certain requirements of the agency and the board to be completed not later than May 1 of each year.

(c) Requires a district that receives notice under Subsection (b), except as otherwise provided by this subsection and not later than August 1 of the year in which the district receives such notice, to enter into an agreement with the public institution of higher education (public institution) in this state in closest geographic proximity to the district to develop a plan to increase the percentage of the district's graduating seniors who enroll in an institution of higher education (institution) for the academic year following graduation. Requires the public institution in this state in closest geographic proximity to the district to enter into an agreement under this subsection unless that institution or the district recruits another public institution in this state to enter into that agreement. Authorizes a district and the public institution entering into the agreement with the district to also enter into an agreement with one or more other public institutions in this state to participate in developing the plan.

(d) Sets forth certain requirements and conditions for a plan developed under this section.

(e) Requires a school district to file the plan with the commissioner of education and the commissioner of higher education.

(f) Requires a school district to implement the plan at the beginning of the school year following the year during which the district receives notice under Subsection (b).

(g) Authorizes a school district to revise the plan as necessary in response to achieving or failing to achieve goals under the plan.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 61C, Education Code, by adding Section 61.088, as follows:

Sec. 61.088. HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAM. Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board (board) to administer and coordinate the Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program to aid prospective students in taking actions relating to enrollment in public or private or independent institutions of higher education. Requires the board to provide the information and assistance required by this section at least twice each year at one or more appropriate locations in each area served by the pilot program. Authorizes the board to coordinate with an institution of higher education or other entity to provide the information and assistance required by this section in each area served by the pilot program. Requires the board, not later than August 31, 2003, to submit to the legislature a report on the effectiveness of the pilot program, including recommendations on whether to implement the program on a statewide basis. Provides that the pilot program ends and this section expires August 31, 2003.

SECTION 3. Provides that the board is required to implement Section 61.088, Education Code, as added by this Act only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. Authorizes the board, if the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, to implement Section 61.088 using other appropriations available for the purpose.

SECTION 4. Sets forth certain requirements and time lines for the agency, the board, and affected public institutions of higher education and school districts for the implementation of the provisions added by this Act.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2001.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

Amends Engrossed H.B. 400 as follows:

Adds new SECTION 1 and redesignates proposed SECTIONS 1 and 2 as SECTIONS 2 and 3.

SECTION 3. Makes conforming changes.

Adds SECTION 4.

Redesignates proposed SECTION 3 as SECTION 5.