

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R8992 JRJ-D

H.B. 3348
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Higher Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas public junior colleges and community colleges have as a core mission to serve their communities, and this includes responding to specific workforce needs in their service areas.

In Northeast Texas, there is no four-year or baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene. Tyler Junior College offers the first three years, but to complete the final year students must travel to another institution, with the closest offering being Texas Women's University in Denton. Oftentimes, students do not return to Northeast Texas after relocating to another city to finish their education, which in this case has resulted in dental care workforce shortages.

In fact, according to the Department of State Health Services, dental care is the greatest unmet healthcare need in many cities and counties located in a 35-county East Texas service area. Tyler Junior College recently expanded a state of the art health science center, and through the institution's Department of Dental Hygiene, has the facilities in place to offer the final year of a baccalaureate degree.

H.B. 3348 would require the Higher Education Coordinating Board to approve a baccalaureate dental hygiene program for community colleges meeting certain criteria. Currently, Tyler Junior College is the only institution that meets the criteria in the bill.

H.B. 3348 amends current law relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 130.0012, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 130.0012, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsections (k) and (l), as follows:

(a) Authorizes, rather than requires, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to authorize public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science, applied technology, and dental hygiene, rather than the fields of applied science and applied technology, under this section. Provides that offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college.

(b) Requires THECB to authorize baccalaureate degree programs at:

(1) Creates this subdivision from existing text and makes no further change; and

(2) one or more public junior colleges that offer a degree program in the field of dental hygiene if, at the time the degree is initially offered, the public junior college:

(A) has a main campus located in the county seat of a county with a population greater than 200,000; and

(B) includes territory in at least six public school districts located in two counties.

(k) Requires THECB to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section.

(l) Defines "general academic teaching institution" and "institution of higher education" in this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.