

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R29051 JRJ-D

C.S.H.B. 3348
By: Clardy; Schaefer (Eltife)
Higher Education
5/21/2015
Committee Report (Substituted)

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.

C.S.S.B. 3348 would require the Higher Education Coordinating Board to approve a pilot project for 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.

C.S.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 adding Subsections (b-1), (b-2), (b-3), (k), and (l), as follows:

(b-1) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish a pilot project to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of authorizing baccalaureate degree programs in the field of dental hygiene at a public junior college that offers a degree program in that field, has a main campus located in the county seat of a county with a population greater than 200,000, and includes territory in at least six public school districts located in two counties. Provides that Subsection (g) does not apply to junior-level and senior-level course offered under this subsection. Requires THECB to recommend that junior-level and senior-level courses offered under this subsection by a public junior college receive the same state support as other courses offered by the public junior college in its recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for public junior colleges.

(b-2) Requires THECB to prepare a progress report on the pilot project established under Subsection (b-1), not later than January 1, 2017. Requires THECB to prepare a report on the effectiveness of the pilot project, including any recommendations for legislative

action regarding the offering of baccalaureate degree programs in the field of dental hygiene by a public junior college, not later than January 1, 2019. Requires THECB to deliver a copy of each report to the governor of the State of Texas, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the chair of the standing committee of each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over higher education. Prohibits a junior college, unless the authority to continue offering a baccalaureate degree program in the field of dental hygiene is continued by the legislature, from:

(1) enrolling a new student in a baccalaureate degree program under the pilot project after the 2019 fall semester;

(2) offering junior-level or a senior-level courses for those degree programs after the 2021 fall semester, unless THECB authorizes the college to offer those courses; or

(3) awarding a baccalaureate degree under the pilot project after the 2021 fall semester, unless THECB approves the awarding of the degree.

(b-3) Provides that this subsection and Subsections (b-1) and (b-2) expire on the first June 15 following the first regular legislative session that occurs after the fourth anniversary of the date a public junior college offering a degree program in the field of dental hygiene under Subsection (b-1) meets the accreditation requirements of Subsection (c).

(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.