

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3775
By: Raney
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note the importance of early literacy skills in calling for a competitive grant program to fund promotion of early literacy programs in certain communities. H.B. 3775 seeks to provide for such a grant program.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3775 amends the Education Code to require The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston to establish a competitive grant program to promote early literacy through which the health science center will award grants for the implementation of literacy programs, or the expansion of existing programs, and for the operation of those programs for a period of not less than two years. The bill requires the health science center to award grants to applicants in a manner that ensures that the literacy programs collectively operate in multiple communities that are geographically distributed throughout Texas. The bill requires a literacy program funded through a grant to consult and use as a guide the program model developed by the Reach Out and Read National Center, require that health care practitioners who participate in the literacy program take specified actions to encourage or increase child literacy and school readiness, and partner with local adult literacy providers to encourage parent literacy in appropriate circumstances.

H.B. 3775 authorizes a public or private entity, including a county, municipality, or other political subdivision, to apply for a grant and requires an applicant to submit a written application to the health science center on a form prescribed by the health science center in consultation with the Reach Out and Read National Center. The bill requires the health science center, with the assistance of the Reach Out and Read National Center, to publish guidelines for the literacy programs funded through a grant and authorizes the guidelines to follow the Reach Out and Read national program model standards and guidelines that have been tested and replicated in multiple communities. The bill authorizes the health science center, in addition to awarding grants, to use grant program funds to administer the program and purchase or contract to purchase discounted books for use by grant recipients. The bill restricts the uses for which a grant recipient may use grant funds to covering costs related to implementing or expanding and operating a literacy program.

H.B. 3775 requires the health science center, with the assistance of the Reach Out and Read National Center, to prepare and submit a biennial report, not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, to the senate committee on education, or its successor, and the house public education committee, or its successor, regarding the grants awarded during the preceding two state fiscal years and sets out the required contents of the report. The bill requires each grant recipient, on request, to timely collect and provide data and any other information required by the health science center to monitor and evaluate the grant program and prepare the report. The bill requires the health science center to submit a report regarding the implementation and status of the grant program to the recipients of the biennial report not later than December 1, 2020.

H.B. 3775 requires the health science center to actively seek and apply for any available federal funds to assist in financing the grant program and authorizes the health science center to use appropriated funds from the state government and to accept gifts, donations, grants of money, and in-kind contributions from the federal government, local governments, private corporations, or other persons to assist in financing the grant program.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.