

- SUBJECT:** Creating the Texas Guided Pathways program
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Lozano, Raney, Alonzo, Alvarado, Button, Howard, Turner
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Clardy, Morrison
- WITNESSES:** For — Brenda Hellyer, Texas Association of Community Colleges; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jaclyn Le, Educate Texas; Miranda Goodsheller, Texas Association of Business; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; James Thurston, United Ways of Texas; Michael Benbow)
- Against — None
- On — John Fitzpatrick, Educate Texas and Communities Foundation of Texas; Harrison Keller, UT Austin; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Rex Peebles, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerned parties note that students seeking to transfer between institutions of higher education can face a confusing array of choices, resulting in a significant amount of lost time and money for students and taxpayers. Some suggest that providing guidance on paths to graduation would help students make more informed choices about the courses they take and transfer options.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3768 would establish the Texas Guided Pathways program. The program's goals would include providing recommended course sequences for all undergraduate certificate and degree programs at institutions of higher education, increasing the efficiency of transferring course credit between two-year and four-year institutions, and helping students avoid taking courses that did not count toward degree programs.

**Recommended course sequences.** Each institution of higher education would develop a recommended course sequence for each undergraduate certificate or degree program. Before June 1 of each year, each institution would have to make necessary updates to recommended course sequences, submit each recommended course sequence to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and post each recommended course sequence on the institution's website.

Institutions of higher education would be required to inform students about recommended course sequences. An institution could modify the course sequences to incorporate recommended changes and comply with applicable policies and laws. The bill would require an institution to honor the version of the recommended course sequence for at least four academic years after the version of the course sequence was adopted.

Before November 1 of each even-numbered year, beginning in 2018, the coordinating board would submit a report to the Legislature on the recommended course sequences at institutions of higher education.

**Web-based platforms.** THECB, in consultation with the Texas OnCourse Initiative and its partnering institutions of higher education, would be required to establish statewide web-based platform that would enable a student to:

- search for and compare recommended course sequences at institutions of higher education; and
- determine whether a specific lower-division course would transfer to another institution for course credit applied toward a certificate or degree program and toward that institution's recommended course sequence for that program.

A link to the new web-based platform would be required any electronic common application system developed by the board.

A similar web-based platform would have to be created by the coordinating board, in consultation with the Texas OnCourse Initiative, to

provide students information regarding transfer compacts between institutions.

The coordinating board would be required to establish the statewide web-based platforms for course sequences and transfer compacts before March 15, 2019.

**Transfer compacts.** Before March 15 of each year, each institution of higher education would be required to submit to THECB a list of the transfer compacts the institution is a part of and a copy of each transfer compact.

Before November 1 of each even-numbered year, beginning in 2020, the coordinating board would be required to submit to the Legislature a report on transfer compacts between institutions of higher education. The initial report would be due before November 1, 2020.

**Gifts, grants, and donations.** The board would be allowed to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for any expenses related to the Texas Guided Pathways program.

**Rules.** The coordinating board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, would be required to adopt rules for the electronic submission of information required to be submitted and would be allowed to adopt rules as necessary to implement the Texas Guided Pathways program.

**Effective date.** The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, the bill would have a negative impact of \$514,166 on general revenue related funds through fiscal 2018-19.