

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R13146 CAS-D

S.B. 1817
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Education
4/24/2001
As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

S.B. 1817 is a response to a recent legislative focus on bridging primary, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education through partnerships between public and higher education. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Special Commission for 21st Century Colleges and Universities, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Higher Education Committee all examined the role such partnerships play in preparing students for college and in increasing their participation in higher education. Currently, there is no statewide partnership program that identifies high schools and districts with low rates of college-bound students. As proposed, S.B. 1817 creates a plan to increase enrollement in higher education of student populations which have traditionally not participated in post-secondary education. The bill requires the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to identify and notify districts that have at least one high school that is in the bottom tenth percentile of the state in its college sending rate for two consecutive years. The bill requires these districts to enter into a partnership with the nearest higher education institution, or another higher education institution that volunteers to partner with the public school district, to increase its college sending rate. The bill requires the partnership to develop a five-year plan to increase college participation and the plan must include clear and measurable goals and be filed with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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) Provides that this section applies only to a school district with one or more high schools that meet certain requirements.

(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. Requires the agency and board to carry out certain duties not later than May 1 of each year.

(c) Requires the district, except as otherwise provided by this subsection or Subsection (h), not later than August 1 of the year in which a school district receives notice under Subsection (b), to enter into an agreement with the public institution of higher education 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 for the academic year following graduation. Requires the public institution of higher education in this state in closest geographic proximity to the district to enter into an agreement under this subsection unless that institution of higher education or the

district recruits another public institution of higher education in this state to enter into that agreement. Authorizes a district and the public institution of higher education entering into the agreement with the district to also enter into an agreement with one or more other public institutions of higher education in this state to participate in developing the plan.

(d) Sets forth provisions relating to 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 school 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.

(h) Provides that a school district that is identified as a school district to which this section applies is not required to develop or implement a plan under this section if the district demonstrates to the satisfaction of the commissioner that this section applies to the district only if students graduating from a district high school described by Subsection (a) who enroll in a private or out-of-state institution of higher education are not counted as students enrolled in an institution of higher education.

SECTION 2. Requires that, notwithstanding Section 29.903, Education Code, as added by this Act, the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board identify initial school districts to which that section applies and provide notice to the districts or public institutions of higher education, as applicable, as prescribed by Section 29.903(b), Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act but not later than September 30, 2001. Requires each initial school district identified to enter into an agreement with a public institution of higher education in this state, as prescribed by Section 29.903(c), Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after receiving notice in accordance with this section but not later than December 31, 2001. Requires each initial school district to implement a plan to increase enrollment of public school students in institutions of higher education, as prescribed by Section 29.903, Education Code, as added by this Act, beginning with the 2002-2003 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2001.