

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2405
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Many rural areas suffer from lack of a skilled workforce to maintain local industries. At the same time, students in rural school districts often have limited access to workforce education or certification.

There is no current law that establishes a workforce investment program specifically designed to target rural areas. This bill would create a rural workforce investment pilot program under the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

As proposed, S.B. 2405 requires TDA to coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Education Agency to develop partnerships in rural areas with school districts, public junior colleges, general academic teaching institutions, and business and industry to provide greater access to career and technical education and industry certification to high school students in those areas. This bill provides that local workforce boards would be eligible for the grant if they serve a rural area of the state and if they commit public or private matching funds.

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 12, Agriculture Code, by adding Section 12.0271, as follows:

Sec. 12.0271. RURAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "general academic teaching institution," "public junior college," and "rural area."

(b) Requires the commissioner of agriculture (commissioner), subject to available funding, to develop a rural workforce investment pilot program to develop partnerships in rural areas among school districts, public junior colleges, general academic teaching institutions, and business and industry to provide greater access to career and technical education and industry certification to high school students in those areas.

(c) Requires the Texas Department of Agriculture to coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Education Agency in developing the pilot program.

(d) Authorizes students participating in the pilot program to receive at least 60 hours of college credit before high school graduation.

(e) Authorizes a local workforce development board authorized by TWC to apply to participate in the pilot program if the workforce development board serves a rural area of the state and meets any other qualifications prescribed by the commissioner.

(f) Requires an applicant, to receive a grant under this section, to commit public or private funds matching the grant in a percentage set by the commissioner.

Requires the commissioner to set the required percentage of matching funds based on the demonstrated economic capacity of the community served by the program to raise funds for the purpose of matching the grant, as determined by the commissioner.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.