STATE LEGISLATION UPDATE
May 31, 2019

*Items added since last Update denoted in red

**Apprenticeships/Internships**

**HB 2784** – Rep. Phelan
Relating to the creation of the Texas Industrial Workforce Apprenticeship grant program. Bill would establish a grant program in the Governor’s Office of Economic Development to meet the immediate industrial workforce needs of the state resulting from the impact of Hurricane Harvey and overall workforce shortages by encouraging the private sector to develop specialized industrial workforce apprenticeship training programs. Would create a grant program housed in the governor’s office for private workforce training apprenticeship programs that are: a) on-the-job paid training, b) guarantee employment upon completion, c) offer at least $15/hour during training, d) must result in a credential or industry recognized certification, e) must be between 16 weeks and 26 weeks, and f) targets veterans, underemployed, ex-offenders and welfare recipients. Will be amended to include industry-based apprenticeship programs.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

**Career and Technical Education**

**HB 963** – Rep. Bell
Relating to the career and technology education and technology applications allotment and the essential knowledge and skills of the career and technology education and technology applications curriculums. The bill would expand the career and technology allotment to include technology applications courses.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

**Child Care**

**HB 680** – Rep. Deshotel
Relating to the evaluation of and improvements to the quality of the Texas Workforce Commission’s subsidized child care program. The bill would amend the Labor Code to require TWC to evaluate additional information regarding the subsidized child care program in order to increase transparency through data collection and improve access to quality programs.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

**Dual Credit, Certifications, Continuing Education**

**SB 251** – Sen. Bettencourt
Relating to courses offered jointly by public junior colleges and independent school districts. Would allow public junior colleges to enter into agreements to provide dual credit courses with any school district located in a county in the service area of the junior college or in an adjacent county in which all or part of a junior college service area is located.

*Status: Passed Senate, Died in House Higher Education*

**SB 502** – Sen. Seliger
Relating to requiring certain institutions of higher education to issue reports on the transferability of credit. S.B. 502 would better inform students and institutions of higher education around the state as to the reason a course credit was not accepted. Specifically, S.B. 502 requires credit receiving institutions to report the why the institution did not grant academic credit for the course, the course name and type, and which institution provided the academic course credit.

*Status – Sent to the Governor*
**SB 863** – Sen. Watson
Relating to a study of costs associated with dual credit courses offered at public high schools. Requires TEA to conduct an ongoing study to examine costs associated with dual credit courses offered at high schools, including data on costs of tuition, fees, textbooks, transportation, instructor compensation, assessments, facilities, and sources of funding.
*Status: Passed Senate, Died in House Calendars*

**SB 1276** – Sen. Powell
Relating to an agreement between a school district and public institution of higher education to provide a dual credit program to high school students enrolled in the district. Bill would provide for the alignment of endorsements offered by school districts, and dual credit courses offered under agreements that apply towards those endorsements, with postsecondary pathways and credentials at the institution and industry certifications.
*Status: Signed by the Governor*

**HB 441** – Rep. Bernal
Relating to requiring the Texas Workforce Commission to pay the cost of taking a high school equivalency examination for certain individuals. In Texas, a number of adults do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent, which can impede pursuit of additional education and better paying jobs. Obtaining a certificate of high school equivalency may lead to improved opportunities, but the cost of high school equivalency assessment exams can be prohibitive for those of limited means. C.S.H.B. 441 seeks to address these concerns by requiring the Texas Workforce Commission to pay the cost of taking one complete high school equivalency examination for an individual who is 21 years of age or older.
*Status: Passed House, Died in Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development*

**HB 1051** – Rep. VanDeaver
Relating to an adult education program provided under an adult high school diploma and industry certification charter school program, eligibility of certain students for Foundation School Program benefits, and reporting requirements regarding the dropout status of certain students. It has been reported that the adult high school and industry certification pilot program has been successful in implementing a comprehensive high school and workforce development program for adults and is a critical partner in meeting the state’s 60x30TX goals. CSHB 1051 therefore seeks to continue the program and make it more accessible to more students.
*Status: Sent to the Governor*

**HB 1949** – Rep. Guillen
Relating to the criteria for awarding adult education and literacy program performance incentive funds. It has been suggested that performance criteria for purposes of awarding incentive funds to entities that deliver adult education and literacy services may lack clarity. CSHB 1949 seeks to remedy this issue and increase the effectiveness of the funding by establishing specific performance benchmarks for these entities.
*Status: Sent to the Governor*

**SB 2042** – Sen. Fallon
Relating to a study by the Texas Education Agency of career and technology education programs. Would require Texas Education Agency to conduct a study to evaluate the industry-recognized credentials and certificates that are currently being offered to public high school students through career and technology education programs; and identify any unmet needs in career and technology education programs currently being offered to public high school students.
*Status: Passed Senate, Referred to House Public Education, Committee report sent to Calendars, Died in Calendars*
**Ex-Offenders**

**HB 918** – Rep. Sherman, Sr.
Relating to providing certain discharged or released inmates with documentation to assist in obtaining employment. Would amend the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to provide certain documentation and job readiness services to certain offenders exiting TDCJ correctional facilities.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

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**Higher Education**

**SB 25** – Sen. West
Relating to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education. S.B. 25 is outlined in two steps and aims to first, simplify the Texas Common Core Curriculum and second, establish stronger Transfer Pathways. First, S.B. 25 would restructure the Texas Common Core. The second step includes transfer pathways to get students from lower division to upper division. These pathways are designed to increase student success by improving alignment among student course-taking, by giving students recommended course sequencing.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

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**HB 277** – Rep. Olivererson
Relating to a requirement that online admission application forms for public institutions of higher education include a link to certain comparative gainful employment data.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

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**HB 1749** – Rep. Wray
Relating to the requirements for a junior college district to receive approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer baccalaureate degree programs. Removed the requirement that a public junior college may offer a baccalaureate degree program only if its junior college district had a taxable property valuation amount of not less than $6 billion in the preceding year.

*Status: Passed House, Died in Senate Higher Education*

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**HB 3657** – Rep. Chris Turner
Relating to the establishment of the Texas Competency-Based Education Grant Program for certain students enrolled in competency-based baccalaureate degree programs and to formula funding and dropped and repeated course restrictions for students enrolled in those degree programs at public institutions of higher education.

*Status: Passed House, Died in Senate Higher Education*

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**HB 4206** – Rep. Lozano
Relating to a requirement that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board include the number of commercial driver's license training program certificates awarded by a public junior college in measuring the achievement of certificate and degree completion goals under the state's master plan for higher education.

*Status: Passed House, Died in Senate Higher Education*

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**Primary Education**

**HB 3** – Rep. Huberty
School finance-funding bill; The final CCR lowers property taxes; reduces recapture payments; expands CTE into middle school (7-12) currently only in high school; and adds a College, career, and military readiness outcomes bonus of $5,000 for economically disadvantaged students, $3,000 for non-economically disadvantaged students to send to districts for students in the top 25th percentile of performance on the SAT and ACT test, and other indicators established by the Commissioner.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*
HB 1388 – Rep. VanDeaver
Relating to indicators of achievement under the public school accountability system. Concerns have been raised that the student achievement domain of the public school accountability system may lack sufficient indicators that account for career readiness. HB 1388 seeks to address this concern by reinstating an indicator for successful completion of a coherent sequence of career and technology courses.

*Status: HB 1388 Passed by House, Died in Senate Education*

HB 2984 – Rep. Allison
Relating to the essential knowledge and skills of the technology applications curriculum and the establishment of a computer science strategic advisory committee to increase computer science instruction and participation in public schools. HB 2984 seeks to ensure that public school students develop knowledge and skills in coding, computer programming, computational thinking, and cybersecurity to prepare them for high paying jobs. The bill amends the Education Code to require the State Board of Education (SBOE), in adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the technology applications curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight, to adopt essential knowledge and skills that include coding, computer programming, computational thinking, and cybersecurity.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

Skills Development Fund

HB 700 – Rep. Guillen
Relating to the use of the skills development fund by certain entities. Adds local workforce development boards, public libraries, and the Texas A&M Engineering Extension service as allowable grantees of Skills Development Fund grants. The Senate substitute deletes public libraries among the entities eligible to use the skills development fund for the specified purposes.

*Status: Sent to the Governor*

HB 1469 – Rep. Thierry
Relating to certain public school workforce training programs funded by the skills development fund. Would expand Skill Development Fund grantees to include public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. Opposed by the Texas Association of Manufacturers.

*Status: Passed House, Died in Senate Natural Resources & Economic Development*

Texas Workforce Commission

SB 2202 – Sen. Fallon
Relating to the administration of the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program. Would require TWC, the extent feasible, to distribute grants equally across geographic areas of this state, including an independent school district located in a rural area of this state in which no public junior college, public technical institute, or public state college is located. Also would require a biennial report that would justify the efficacy of the JET funds.

*Status: Passed Senate, Died in Calendars*

HB 1 – Rep. Zerwas
General Appropriations Bill. Currently includes the Subcommittee on Infrastructure, Resiliency and Investment’s recommendations on information technology funding. These include approval of all TWC’s infrastructure requests; the Eligible Training Provider and Career Schools System, TWC’s request for an Unemployment Insurance System Replacement, and the Workforce Case Management System. All these items were funded at their full amount. This includes TWC requests for $35.1 million for child care removed from the filed version of HB 1 in FY 2021, $6 million in additional funding for the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) program and $1.345 million in additional funding for TWC’s Apprenticeship program. The bill also supports community colleges’ “success point” outcomes funding, and funds the Texas State Technical Colleges (TSTC)’s “commission rate” funding model that pays the technical institution based on their graduates’ incomes, not contact hours.

*Status: Sent to the Comptroller*
**SB 756 -- Rep. Hinojosa**
Relating to the participation of eligible nonprofit organizations in the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant program. Would allow non-profits who engage in workforce training to participate in the TWC’s JET Fund (which is currently available to community colleges, TSTC and ISDs).
*Status: Passed Senate, Died in Calendars*

**SB 1055 -- Sen. Zaffirini**
Relating to the administration by the Texas Workforce Commission of a workforce diploma pilot program. S.B. 1055 would create a framework for an adult workforce diploma program at TWC. Specifically, it would define a workforce diploma program, in which providers are reimbursed only for completed student credits; provide eligibility criteria for qualified program providers; establish an open approval process for qualified program providers; codify performance milestones and compensation amounts, including completion of credits, employability skills programming, industry credential preparation training, and attainment of an accredited high school diploma; require approved providers to report annually on numbers of participating students and milestones attained; establish minimum program performance standards for providers; and require TWC to review program-level performance data for each provider against minimum performance standards and to take prescribed action against low performing programs.
*Status: Signed by the Governor*

**TANF**

**HB 1483 – Rep. Frank**
Relating to a pilot program for assisting certain recipients of public benefits to gain permanent self-sufficiency. Would require the Department of Health and Human Services to create a pilot program that tests whether a slow reduction of benefits, paired with wrap-around case management services aimed at securing a living wage job; an emergency savings account; and a debt management plan, will help clients reach long-term self-sufficiency independent of public benefits.
*Status: Signed by the Governor*

**Veterans Affairs**

**HB 114 – Rep. White**
Relating to providing public high school students information regarding the availability of college credit awarded for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service. HB 114 intends to facilitate greater dissemination of information for high school students and students who have enlisted or who intend to enlist in the U.S. armed forces about college credit for military experience, education, and training. Would require TWC to cooperate with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in making this information available to public school districts and charter schools.
*Status: Signed by the Governor*

**HB 696 – Rep. Blanco**
Relating to employment and referral services for veterans and military service members. Would codify the Operation Welcome Home and Texas Veterans Leadership programs.
*Status: Sent to the Governor*

**HB 714 – Rep. Lucio III**
Relating to a reemployment program available to certain veterans placed on community supervision for a misdemeanor offense. In connection with efforts to facilitate veterans’ reentry to the civilian workforce, there have been calls to specifically target veterans who are placed on community supervision for misdemeanor offenses. H.B. 714 seeks to provide such a transition process for that population by creating the veterans reemployment program, under which the Texas Workforce Commission provides education and training courses focused on workplace skills during the community supervision period.
*Status: Sent to the Governor*
**Workforce Training**

**SB 429** – Sen. Lucio (companion **HB 1669, Lucio III**)
Relating to a comprehensive plan for increasing and improving the workforce in this state to serve persons with mental health and substance use issues.

*Status:*  *Both bills died in House*

**HB 3511** – Rep. VanDeaver
Relating to the creation of the Commission on Texas Workforce of the Future. A Commission on Texas Workforce of the Future would be established to engage business, state agencies, and local workforce system partners in the efforts of state and local authorities to build the state’s workforce talent pipeline.

*Status:*  *Sent to the Governor*

**SB 2038** – Sen. Rodríguez
Relating to a report by the Texas Workforce Commission regarding occupational skills training for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Directs TWC to prepare and publish a report by November 1, 2020 on the potential funding sources for occupational skills training programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and identify specific occupations requiring a degree, license or Workforce credential that would be appropriate for the IDD population.

*Status:*  *Passed Senate, Passed House, Sent to Governor*

**HB 4347** – Rep. Anchia
Relating to the use of certain tax revenue by certain municipalities for the payment of job training programs and the development of hotel and convention center projects.

*Status:*  *Sent to the Governor*