

EDUCATION CODE  
SUBTITLE B. STATE COORDINATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
CHAPTER 61. TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

SUBCHAPTER C. POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARD

Sec. 61.051. COORDINATION OF INSTITUTIONS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) The board shall represent the highest authority in the state in matters of public higher education and is charged with the duty to take an active part in promoting quality education in the various regions of the state. The board shall be responsible for assuring that there is no discrimination in the distribution of programs and resources throughout the state on the basis of race, national origin, or sex.

(a-1) The board shall develop a five-year master plan for higher education in this state. The five-year plan shall take into account the resources of private institutions of higher education in this state.

(a-2) The board shall periodically review and revise the five-year master plan developed under Subsection (a-1). As a specific element of its review, the board shall identify and analyze the degree to which the plan reflects the continuing higher education needs of this state, as well as any policy changes necessary to improve overall implementation of the plan and the fiscal impact of those changes. The board shall establish procedures for monitoring the board's implementation of the plan, including an analysis of the degree to which its current activities support implementation of the plan and any change in board rules or practices necessary to improve implementation of the plan. The board shall identify additional strategies necessary to achieve the goals of the plan, emphasizing implementation by institutions of higher education and specific recommendations for the different regions of the state. The board shall notify each institution of higher education of all strategies for implementing the plan.

(a-3) The board shall inform the legislature on matters pertaining to higher education, including the state's activities in the Board of Control for Southern Regional Education, and shall report to the legislature not later than January 1 of each odd-numbered year on the state of higher education in Texas. In the biennial report, the board shall assess the state's progress in meeting the goals stated in the plan developed under Subsection (a-1) and shall recommend legislative action to assist the state in meeting those goals. The report must include the analyses performed in connection with the board's periodic review under Subsection (a-2).

(b) The board shall define a technical institute, a junior college, a senior college, a university, and a university system; provided, that nothing in this section may be construed to authorize the board to establish or create any technical institute system or university system or to alter any technical institute system or university system presently existing by virtue of statute or the constitution of this state.

(c) The board shall develop and publish criteria to be used as a basis for determining the need for changing the classification of any public institution of higher education and for determining the need for new public technical institutes, public junior colleges, public senior colleges, universities, or university systems.

(d) The board shall develop, after direct consultation with the governing board of the institution and after providing a forum for a public hearing, the role and mission for each public institution of higher education in Texas. The board shall hear applications from the institutions for changes in role and mission and make changes necessary to update the role and mission

statements of each institution. The board shall adopt by rule the criteria to be used in reviewing the role and mission statements. The board, after direct consultation with the governing board of the institution and after providing the forum for a public hearing, may prescribe by rule maximum enrollment limits for such institution. In setting maximum enrollment limits, the board shall take into account any financial hardship such enrollment limits might cause qualified Texas residents seeking a higher education. The governing board of each institution shall determine the maximum enrollment limits for any department, school, degree program, or certificate program at the institution.

(e) The board shall review periodically the role and mission statements, the table of programs, and all degree and certificate programs offered by the public institutions of higher education to assure that they meet the present and future needs of the state and the counties in which they are located. The board's review shall be performed at least every four years and shall involve the chairperson of the institution's board of regents. The board shall also order the initiation, consolidation, or elimination of degree or certificate programs where that action is in the best interest of the public institutions themselves or the general requirements of the State of Texas, the counties in which they are located, or when that action offers hope of achieving excellence by a concentration of available resources. No new department, school, degree program, or certificate program may be added at any public institution of higher education except with specific prior approval of the board. The board may authorize an institution to continue a doctoral program that is inconsistent with the role and mission of the institution if the program was in existence on September 1, 1987, and the board determines that continuation of the program is warranted.

(f) The board shall encourage and develop new certificate programs in technical and vocational education in Texas public technical institutes and public community colleges as the needs of technology and industry may demand and shall recommend the elimination of such programs for which a need no longer exists. The board shall conduct a review of the certificate programs at least every four years or on the request of the Texas Workforce Investment Council and shall terminate a program that does not meet performance review standards and other criteria established by the board. The board shall assume the leadership role and administrative responsibilities for state level administration of postsecondary technical-vocational education programs in Texas public community colleges, public technical institutes, and other eligible public postsecondary institutions. The board shall ensure that standardized minimum technical and skill-specific competency and performance standards for each workforce education program, as developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council, are used in the board's review, approval, or disapproval of a vocational and technical program financed by state and federal funds.

(g) The board shall develop and promulgate a basic core of general academic courses which shall be freely transferable among all public institutions of higher education in Texas which are members of recognized accrediting agencies on the same basis as if the work had been taken at the receiving institution. The board shall develop and implement policies to provide for the free transferability of lower division course credit among institutions of higher education.

(h) The board shall make continuing studies of the needs of the state for research and designate the institutions of higher education to perform research as needed. The board shall also maintain an inventory of all institutional and programmatic research activities being conducted by the various institutions,

whether state-financed or not. Once a year, on dates prescribed by the board, each institution of higher education shall report to the board all research conducted at that institution during the last preceding year. All reports required by this subsection shall be made subject to the limitations imposed by security regulations governing defense contracts for research.

(i) The board shall develop and periodically revise a long-range statewide plan to provide information and guidance to policy makers to ensure that institutions of higher education meet the current and future needs of each region of this state for higher education services and that adequate higher education services at all levels are reasonably and equally available to the residents of each region of this state. The board in developing the plan shall examine existing undergraduate, graduate, professional, and research programs provided by institutions of higher education and identify the geographic areas of this state that, as a result of current population or projected population growth, distance from other educational resources, economic trends, or other factors, have or are reasonably likely to have in the future significantly greater need for higher education services than the services currently provided in the area by existing institutions of higher education. The board shall also consider the higher education services provided by private and independent institutions of higher education in developing the plan. The board shall identify as specifically as practicable the programs or fields of study for which an area has or is projected to have a significant unmet need for services. In determining the need for higher educational services in an area, the board shall consider the educational attainment of the current population and the extent to which residents from the area attend institutions of higher education outside of the area or do not attend institutions of higher education. The board shall include in the plan specific recommendations, including alternative recommendations, for administrative or legislative action to address an area's unmet need for higher educational services as efficiently as possible. Not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year, the board shall deliver to the governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature a report of the current long-range plan developed under this section.

(j) No off-campus courses for credit may be offered by any public technical institute, public community college, or public college or university without specific prior approval of the board. However, any of those institutions may offer a distance learning course approved by the board with no in-state geographic restrictions if the course is within the approved curriculum of the institution. To facilitate the delivery of courses by distance learning and to improve access to those courses, the board shall encourage collaborative efforts to make the benefits of computer access to educational opportunities widely available. The board shall maintain a central informational resource accessible to the general public that provides information relating to distance learning courses and programs offered for credit by institutions of higher education and information including computer links, addresses, or other directions to assist an interested person to obtain additional information directly from the appropriate institution. The board may not prohibit a public junior college district from offering a course for credit outside the boundaries of the junior college district when such course has met the requirements for approval as adopted by the board. The board shall establish regulations for the coordination of credit activities of adult and continuing education by public technical institutes, public community colleges, or public colleges and universities.

(k) The board shall establish and maintain a management

information system that includes the presentation of uniform statistical information that is appropriate to planning, financing, and decision-making rather than regulation.

(l) The board shall advise and offer technical assistance on the request of any institution or system administration.

(m) The board shall publish and distribute materials on admission policies, transferable courses among institutions, financial assistance programs, and other matters of interest to persons choosing an institution in which to enroll. It is the intent of the legislature that materials distributed under this subsection be designed to promote and encourage students to complete high school coursework and aspire to their highest potential by obtaining a degree or certificate from an institution of higher education.

(n) The board shall develop guidelines for institutional reporting of student performance.

(o) The board shall encourage cooperative programs and agreements among institutions of higher education, including, among others, programs and agreements relating to degree offerings, research activities, and library and computer sharing.

(p) The board shall administer trusteed funds, grant programs, research competition awards, and other funds and programs as directed by the legislature.

(q) The board shall develop a statewide telecommunications network among institutions of higher education for integrated teaching and data transmission and computation, but only to the extent that the telecommunications services are not available through a system of telecommunications services established for state agencies generally.

(r) The board shall conduct a review of all doctoral programs offered at institutions of higher education. The review shall consider:

- (1) program quality;
- (2) demand for the degree program;
- (3) number of graduates;
- (4) geographic distribution of doctoral degree programs;
- (5) employment opportunities and demand for degree holders; and
- (6) duplication with other programs.

The board shall begin the review by considering first the institutions that offer a single doctoral program. The review must be completed by December 1992. The board shall report the results of the review regarding public institutions of higher education to the legislature not later than the convening of the regular legislative session in 1993.

Acts 1971, 62nd Leg., p. 3072, ch. 1024, art. 1, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1971. Amended by Acts 1975, 64th Leg., p. 2055, ch. 676, Sec. 1, 2, eff. June 20, 1975; Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 646, Sec. 2, eff. Aug. 26, 1985; Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 823, Sec. 1.06, eff. June 20, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1084, Sec. 1.11, 4.01(1), eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 668, Sec. 7.01, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 138, Sec. 1, eff. May 19, 1997; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 373, Sec. 1, eff. May 25, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 818, Sec. 6.03, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 820, Sec. 12, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 354, Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2005.