

By: Campbell

S.B. No. 276

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to state savings and government efficiency achieved through a taxpayer savings grant program administered by the comptroller of public accounts.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 42.253, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(b-1) Notwithstanding Subsection (b), the commissioner shall adjust enrollment estimates and entitlement for each school district for each school year based on information provided by the comptroller under Section 42.501(f). This subsection expires September 1, 2020.

SECTION 2. Chapter 42, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter J to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. TAXPAYER SAVINGS GRANTS

Sec. 42.501. TAXPAYER SAVINGS GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "eligible student" means a school-age child who resides in the state and who:

(1) is entering kindergarten or first grade;

(2) attended a public school for all of the academic year immediately preceding initial participation in the Taxpayer Savings Grant Program; or

(3) participated in the program in a preceding academic year.

1 (b) A parent or legal guardian of an eligible student who
2 agrees to accept reimbursement in an amount that is less than the
3 state average maintenance and operations expenditures per student
4 may receive reimbursement from the state for the tuition paid for
5 the enrollment of the eligible student at a private school in an
6 amount that is the lesser of:

7 (1) the tuition paid; or

8 (2) 60 percent of the state average maintenance and
9 operations expenditures per student.

10 (c) Money from the available school fund and federal funds
11 may not be used for reimbursement under this section.

12 (d) A private school voluntarily selected by a parent for
13 the parent's child to attend, with or without governmental
14 assistance, may not be required to comply with any state law or rule
15 governing the school's educational program that was not in effect
16 on January 1, 2015.

17 (e) The comptroller shall administer the program and
18 provide reimbursement to a parent or legal guardian of an eligible
19 student as authorized by this section.

20 (f) Not later than October 1 of each year, the comptroller
21 shall notify the commissioner and the Legislative Budget Board of
22 the number of eligible students likely to participate in the
23 program, disaggregated by the school district or open-enrollment
24 charter school the eligible students would otherwise attend. Not
25 later than March 1 of each year, the comptroller shall provide final
26 information to the commissioner and the Legislative Budget Board
27 regarding the number of students participating in the program,

1 disaggregated in the same manner as the initial information.

2 SECTION 3. As soon as practicable, but not later than
3 October 15, 2015, the comptroller, in coordination with the
4 commissioner of education, shall adopt rules to implement the
5 Taxpayer Savings Grant Program under Section 42.501, Education
6 Code, as added by this Act, including rules to prevent fraud in
7 financial transactions under the program and to determine the net
8 savings resulting from implementation of the program. The rules
9 must require reconciliation of payments for all grants within the
10 same fiscal year or within the first month following the end of the
11 fiscal year.

12 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.