



Senate Education Committee

Senator Mike Folmer
Chairman

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BILL SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1000, Printer's No. 1312

Prime Sponsor: Senator Scarnati

SYNOPSIS:

Senate Bill 1000 amends the Public School Code to provide for a rural regional community college pilot program.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Senate Bill 1000 amends the Public School Code to establish an eleven county rural regional community college pilot program to provide a comprehensive community college education and workforce development in an underserved area.

Within 30 days, the Secretary of Education shall work with a non-profit rural multicounty regional organization that represents an underserved area in need of a comprehensive community college and workforce development program. In the following 60 days, a seven to eleven member board of trustees for a rural regional community college shall be appointed by the secretary.

The secretary must convene the initial meeting of the board within 90 days. The board must submit a proposal on the rural regional community college to the secretary within one year. The proposal shall include the name of the proposed community college, a survey of the vocational and occupational needs of the area and how the community college will meet those needs, reduce unemployment and improve the skills of residents, an operating and financial plan, capital needs plan and accreditation plan. The secretary must approve or reject the plan within 30 days. Approval of the plan establishes the rural regional community college.

Upon approval of the plan, the board shall appoint and fix the salaries of a president and treasurer of the regional rural community college, provide for the buildings and supplies, enter into contracts for services, accept gifts of real and personal property, money and grants, and make policies for admission, courses, tuition and administration. Residents of the 11-county region, shall receive preference on tuition and fees. The tuition amount may not exceed the in-resident community college average. The community college may award any type of diploma, technical or career training certificate or degree, not to exceed an associate's degree. Students attending the community college are eligible for financial aid.

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The community college may not dissolve unless approved by the secretary, at which time the Commonwealth would assume all of the community college's assets and liabilities.

The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall review the success of the regional community college in establishing its goals, demographic data and program data, student progress and achievement measures, economic and workforce development measures and make future recommendations in a report to the General Assembly.

This article will expire on June 30, 2023 unless re-enacted.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

Amendment A04850 to SB 1000:

Amendment A04850 removes the provision to make the community college a pilot program and its expiration date and changes the eleven county region to a multicounty region. It expands the make-up of the board to allow for up to 15 members and requires members to be from the multicounty area that may include school administrators, community education council officials, business leaders and government officials.

The board must establish an advisory committee of presidents from post-secondary institutions in the region to discuss employer and workforce needs, new educational offerings and coordination of services and facilities.

The board must also partner with a Middle States accredited institution of higher education to develop and offer accredited courses and programs of study. As the rural regional community college is able to operate on its own, a transition plan shall go into effect.