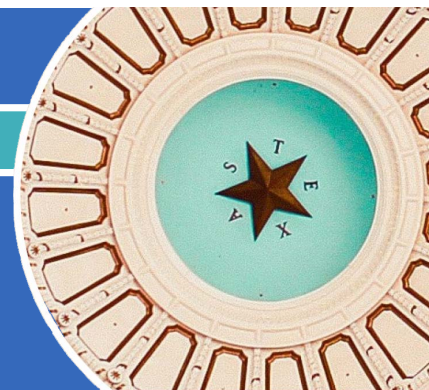


HB 2209

Relating to establishing the Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) and creating an allotment and outcomes bonus under the Foundation School Program to support the program.

Author: Representative J.M. Lozano

Sponsor: Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa

**Bill Summary:**

[House Bill 2209](#) (HB 2209) establishes the Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) program. This program would allow rural school districts to partner with at least one other school district and a coordinating entity to offer college and career pathways aligned to regional labor market projections for high-wage, high-demand careers. Under this statute R-PEP programs are provided grants to assist with planning and implementation, an adjusted formula for calculating average daily attendance (ADA), an additional allotment, and a college, career, and military readiness (CCMR) outcomes bonus.

The commissioner will establish and administer the R-PEP program to incentivize and support multi-district, cross-sector, and rural college and career pathway partnerships for underserved students while promoting rural economic development. To be eligible to participate in the R-PEP program a district must have fewer than 1,600 students in ADA and partner with at least one other school district within 100 miles to offer college and career pathways that align with regional labor market projections for high-wage, high-demand careers. These partnerships will be managed by a coordinating entity.

Eligibility:

School districts interested in R-PEP are required to notify the commissioner of education their intent to enter into the agreement using procedures established by the commissioner. In authorizing R-PEP partnerships, the commissioner is required to give priority to partnerships in which participating districts contract with a coordinating entity that has at least two years' experience or employs an executive officer with at least two years' experience managing college and career pathways under a performance contract. The commissioner is required to notify districts of R-PEP approval within 60 days of a district's application.

Funding:

The commissioner is required to make available grants for use by a coordinating entity for a two-year period to assist with costs associated with the planning, development, establishment, or expansion of R-PEP partnerships using state funds allocated under this statute, as well as money appropriated for that purpose, and any other funds made available.

For each full-time student in grades 9-12 in average daily attendance enrolled in an R-PEP college or career pathway, a school district is entitled to an allotment equal to the basic allotment or, if applicable, the sum of the basic allotment and the small to mid-sized district allotment to which the district is entitled,

- multiplied by 1.15, if the student is educationally disadvantaged;
- or 1.11, if the student is not educationally disadvantaged. ~~Confinted onfo newf page—~~

Impact of Legislation**Effective Date**

- See bill text for effective date.

Rulemaking

- Commissioner of education must adopt rules pertaining to the establishment and administration of the R-PEP program and grant program.

Other Actions Required

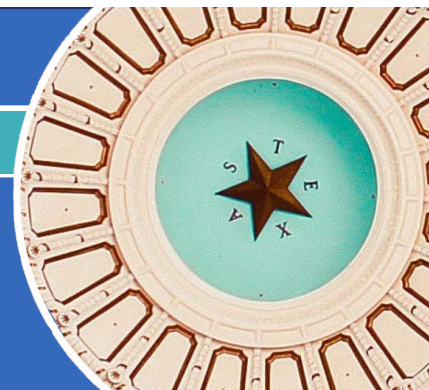
- TEA will establish and administer R-PEP program.
- The Commissioner will create a process for districts to notify TEA of their interest in participating in R-PEP.

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For each R-PEP graduate who earns a postsecondary credential of value during the preceding school year, in excess of the minimum number determined for the applicable cohort for that school year, the school district is entitled to an annual outcomes bonus of:

- \$1,500, if the graduate is educationally disadvantaged;
- \$750, if the graduate is not educationally disadvantaged; and
- \$1,500, if the graduate is enrolled in a special education program, regardless of whether the graduate is educationally disadvantaged.

At least 80 percent of funds allocated under this section are required to be spent as provided in the budget adopted by the board of the coordinating entity. For each school district, the commissioner is required to determine the minimum number of annual graduates an R-PEP pathway must have that obtain a postsecondary credential of value including: a degree, certificate, or other credential that prepares the student for continued learning and greater earnings in the state economy, as determined by the THECB, not later than five years after high school graduation.

