

GREEN SHEET REDIGEST

HB 196

2022 Regular Session

Nelson

HIGHER EDUCATION: Creates the Stimulating More Advanced Research and Technology (SMART) Program and the SMART Fund for the purpose of awarding grants to support research at public postsecondary education institutions

DIGEST

Proposed law establishes the SMART Program for the purpose of awarding grants to support research in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at public postsecondary education institutions. Provides for program administration by the Bd. of Regents. Proposed law further:

- (1) Provides that grants shall be used for the following purposes:
 - (a) Matching research grants from federal agencies and other sources.
 - (b) Awarding hiring bonuses and startup packages for the purpose of attracting faculty.
 - (c) Construction, improvement, or procurement of research facilities, laboratories, equipment, or supplies.
 - (d) Scholarships and stipends for graduate students.
- (2) Requires the board, as funding allows, to award grants on a competitive basis among the four categories above with a preference for those purposes related to research that has the opportunity for commercialization.
- (3) Requires at least 20% of the grants to be awarded to institutions outside of the Baton Rouge and New Orleans metro regions.
- (4) Requires the percentage of all grant amounts in a year that is awarded to historically black colleges and universities be approximately equal to the percentage of all students enrolled in post secondary education institutions who are enrolled at historically black colleges and universities.

Proposed law creates the SMART Fund within the state treasury for the purpose of providing funding for the SMART program and:

- (1) Authorizes and directs the state treasurer, on July 1, 2026, to transfer \$150 million from the state general fund into the fund. Each subsequent July first, requires the state treasurer to transfer from the state general fund into the fund an amount sufficient to bring the balance of the fund to \$150 million.
- (2) Provides that monies in the fund are subject to legislative appropriation and shall be available exclusively for use by the Bd. of Regents for the SMART program.

Proposed law requires the board to submit a written report containing a return on investment analysis to the House and Senate education committees, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance not later than Jan. 31st annually and to adopt rules and regulations for the implementation of proposed law.

Effective upon appropriation of funds by the legislature.

(Adds R.S. 17:3138.10)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Appropriations to the engrossed bill:

1. Add institutions that are members of the La. Assoc. of Independent Colleges and Universities as eligible recipients of grants pursuant to proposed law.
2. Add requirement that grants be awarded such that the percentage of all grant amounts in a year that is awarded to historically black colleges and universities is approximately equal to the percentage of all students enrolled in postsecondary education institutions who are enrolled at historically black colleges and universities.
3. Remove requirement that each year the treasurer transfer \$150,000,000 from the state general fund into the fund.
4. Add requirement that on July 1, 2026, the treasurer transfer \$150,000,000 from the state general fund into the fund. Thereafter, each July first, require the treasurer to transfer from the state general fund into the fund an amount sufficient to bring the balance of the fund up to \$150,000,000.
5. Make effectiveness of proposed law subject to appropriation of funds by the legislature.
6. Make technical changes.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the reengrossed bill

1. Removes private institutions as possible grant recipients.
2. Clarifies that grants may be awarded to support research in the fields of biomedical science and agricultural science.
3. Includes postdoctoral fellows as possible scholarship recipients.
4. Makes technical changes.