

**HB 2177-S2.E - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Creates the rural county high employer demand jobs program to: (1) Meet the workforce needs of business and industry in rural counties by assisting students in earning certificates, associate degrees, or other industry-recognized credentials necessary for employment in high employer demand fields; and

(2) Provide selected students scholarship funds and support services, as determined by the opportunity scholarship board, to help them meet their eligible expenses when they enroll in a community or technical college program that prepares them for a high employer demand field.

Requires the opportunity scholarship board to create the student support pathways account, from which scholarship funds will be disbursed beginning no later than the fall term of the 2020 academic year, if by that date, state matching funds have been received.

Creates the rural jobs program match transfer account to be used for the rural jobs program and to provide state matching funds for the program.

Prohibits the total amount of state matching funds for the rural jobs program from exceeding one million dollars in a single fiscal biennium.