

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2591
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Education
5/3/1999
Engrossed

DIGEST

Currently, some students are unable to pursue education beyond high school because they are required to take remedial courses after failing a portion of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test. TASP was developed to measure whether potential undergraduates are capable of doing college-level work, and to determine the necessity of developmental or remedial courses to be taken in conjunction with regular courses. H.B. 2591 clarifies and expands regulations for skills assessment and placement testing of undergraduate students.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 2591 clarifies and expands regulations for skills assessment and placement testing of undergraduate students entering institutions of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the governing board of an institution of higher education in SECTION 1 (Section 51.306(y), Education Code), and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 5(a) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 51.306, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 51.306. New heading: ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT. Redefines "board," "deaf student," and "blind student." Defines "core curriculum." Requires each institution of higher education (institution) to adopt an assessment and placement plan for entering students. Requires the plan to be filed with, and approved by, the governing board of each institution (board). Sets forth approval requirements and plan requirements. Provides that the plan may not prohibit a student from enrolling in certain courses, if the student completes certain developmental education requirements. Authorizes the institution to provide guidance or advice to the student. Requires testing prior to enrolling in a course included in the institution's core curriculum, rather than any course work. Requires the institution to use a test, rather than the Texas Academic Skills Program Test. Requires the board to prescribe multiple test instruments. Provides that the board prescribes, rather than adopts, test instruments, to evaluate the student's potential to perform in the core curriculum, rather than an undergraduate degree program. Authorizes, rather than requires, the board to take certain action while prescribing, rather than developing, the test instruments, rather than the Texas Academic Skills Program Test. Prohibits credit from being awarded to developmental education programs offered under this section. Authorizes a student to enroll in certain courses only after satisfying the requirements of the institutional plan for assessment and placement adopted under Subsection (b), or after completion of the core curriculum with a certain grade point average. Authorizes test cost payment by direct payment or by a fee imposed by the institution. Requires the board to publish the total number of students who satisfied the requirements of the institutional plan for developmental education described by Subsection (b). Provides that this section does not apply to a student enrolled in a certificate program at a public junior or community college or public technical institute, a student seeking a degree or certificate who is of a certain age, or a student who is a member of the United States Armed Forces on active duty. Sets forth provisions for the payment of a test by the board or the student's school district. Requires the board to adopt rules to ensure program quality and effectiveness. Requires the rules to provide for accountability and promote improvement in developmental education programs. Requires the board to take certain action in the adoption of

rules. Requires a majority of the advisory committee members to be faculty members of institutions. Deletes text regarding required tests, alternative test instruments, the Texas Academic Skills Program Test, grades, formulas, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and an exemption. Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 132C, Education Code, by adding Section 132.0631, as follows:

Sec. 132.0631. **ACADEMIC SKILLS REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE PROGRAMS.** Prohibits the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board from adopting criteria for certain student academic skills for proprietary schools that are more stringent than criteria for program offered by an institution.

SECTION 3. Authorizes a public junior college or public technical institute to award a certificate to a person who has not completed the requirements of Section 51.306, Education Code, under certain conditions.

SECTION 4. Prohibits an institute from requiring a student to undergo certain testings if the student was in enrolled in an institution and had passed or completed certain courses prior to the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 5. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules to implement the requirements of Section 51.306, Education Code. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the spring semester of 2000.

SECTION 6. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.