

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 436
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The collegiate learning assessment (CLA) is a testing instrument that measures critical thinking, problem solving, analysis of information, quantitative reasoning, and critical reading using performance-based measures that require the analysis of multiple source documents. The CLA is a broad measurement of student skills that are applicable across multiple fields including critical reasoning, communication, and other skills.

Since 2003, tuition rates have increased across the state on average 90 percent while personal income growth has only increased roughly 35 percent. As this trend continues into the future, more and more Texans will be priced out of a postsecondary education. With tuition increasing this dramatically it is imperative to know that universities are effectively educating the individuals who receive degrees.

S.B. 436 requires public, four-year institutions of higher education to administer the CLA to all incoming students and all graduating students in the last semester of their undergraduate enrollment.

As proposed, S.B. 436 amends current law relating to administration of collegiate learning assessments to students at general academic teaching institutions.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Sections 51.329 and 51.330, Education Code) and SECTION 2 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Subchapter F-1, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER F-1. COLLEGIATE LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Sec. 51.321. DEFINITIONS. Defines "collegiate learning assessment," "coordinating board," and "general academic teaching institution" in this section.

Sec. 51.322. ASSESSMENT REQUIRED; PURPOSES. Requires each general academic teaching institution to administer a collegiate learning assessment in accordance with this subchapter to measure student learning, foster a transparent learning environment, and ensure that the institution is accountable for educating the institution's students by measuring the institution's contributions to student educational development.

Sec. 51.323. ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE. Requires that a collegiate learning assessment be administered to each entering freshman student at a general academic teaching institution before the first day of class and to each student at a general academic teaching institution during the semester or other academic term in which the student is on track to graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Sec. 51.324. DEFERMENTS. (a) Authorizes a student who is unable to take a collegiate learning assessment during a required period described by Section 51.323 to submit to the

vice president of academic affairs or other appropriate official as designated by the general academic teaching institution a request to defer taking the assessment. Requires the official to grant the request if the official determines that the student is unable to take the assessment during the required period due to extenuating circumstances as established by institution policy.

(b) Requires a student to submit a request for a deferment under Subsection (a), in the manner prescribed by the institution either before the official date of the assessment or if there is not an official assessment date, before the final day of the semester or other academic term in which the student is required to take the assessment.

(c) Requires a student granted a deferment under this section to take the assessment during the institution's first administration of the assessment following the end of the deferment period.

Sec. 51.325. FAILURE TO TAKE ASSESSMENT. Provides that if a student fails to take a collegiate learning assessment in accordance with Section 51.323 and either is not granted a deferment or is granted a deferment but fails to comply with Section 51.324(c), any general academic teaching institution:

(1) is prohibited from allowing the student to register for classes unless the student is admitted or readmitted to the institution in accordance with Section 51.326; and

(2) is required to refuse to release the student's official transcript to the student for a reasonable period in accordance with institution policy.

Sec. 51.326. ADMISSION OR READMISSION AFTER FAILURE TO TAKE ASSESSMENT. (a) Prohibits a student described by Section 51.325 from being accepted for admission or readmission to any general academic teaching institution for a semester or other academic term until the second academic term following the initial academic term for which the student was disallowed from registering for classes under Section 51.325(1).

(b) Requires a student described by Section 51.325 who is admitted or readmitted to a general academic teaching institution to take the appropriate collegiate learning assessment during the institution's first administration of the assessment following the student's enrollment.

(c) Requires an institution to immediately expel a student who fails to take the assessment as required by Subsection (b).

Sec. 51.327. TRANSFER STUDENTS. Requires a student who transfers into a general academic teaching institution to take the collegiate learning assessment before registering for classes.

Sec. 51.328. EXCUSED ABSENCE. (a) Requires a general academic teaching institution to excuse a student from attending classes or completing an assignment as necessary for the student to take a collegiate learning assessment in accordance with this subchapter.

(b) Requires the institution to allow a student with an excused absence under this section to make up any class assignment, including any examination, that is due or administered during the student's excused absence. Requires that the student be provided a reasonable period in which to make up the original assignment or be provided with a makeup assignment that is similar in content and expectations to the missed assignment and provided within a reasonable time after the excused absence.

Sec. 51.329. REPORTING AND TRANSCRIPT REQUIREMENTS. (a) Requires each general academic teaching institution to report the results of the collegiate learning assessment to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) at the time and in a manner established by THECB rule.

(b) Requires each general academic teaching institution to include a student's collegiate learning assessment scores on the student's official transcript.

Sec. 51.330. RULES. Requires THECB to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this subchapter.

SECTION 2. (a) Provides that Subchapter F-1, Chapter 51, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2014 fall semester.

(b) Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of Subchapter F-1, Chapter 51, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.