

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 384
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

H.B. 5, adopted by the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, reduced the number of standardized tests required to graduate from a Texas high school. In doing so, the legislature made the assessments for Algebra II and English III optional for school districts to administer. If school districts choose to administer these assessments, they must test all students enrolled in these courses. The results of these assessments cannot be used for a grade, impact class rank, count against the school's accountability rating, or be used for teacher evaluation; however, the students taking these examinations could use their scores to satisfy the testing requirements of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI).

TSI is designed to ensure that students entering college are ready for college-level work. Scores on several nationally recognized standardized tests, such as the ACT and SAT, could be used to exempt a student from taking the TSI assessment to evaluate their college-readiness. Similarly, scores on the optional Algebra II and English III examinations could be used to satisfy this exemption as well.

Unfortunately, the optional administration of these assessments is statutorily mandated to occur after the second full week in May. This conflicts with the separate administration of Advanced Placement examinations by the College Board, causing many school districts to choose not to administer the Algebra II and English III assessments that could help students satisfy their TSI requirement and prove college readiness.

S.B. 384 amends Section 39.0238(c), Education Code, which states, "In adopting a schedule for the administration of postsecondary readiness assessment instruments under this section, the State Board of Education shall require the annual administration of the postsecondary readiness assessment instruments to occur not earlier than the second full week in May."

S.B. 384 also adds a provision that states that the State Board of Education (SBOE) will make all possible efforts to avoid scheduling these optional assessments in a manner that conflicts with other test administrations.

Supporters of S.B. 384 contend that granting SBOE flexibility in the administration dates of optional exams allows more districts and thus more students the ability to participate in the exam. For many students, these tests offer the only opportunity to demonstrate college readiness for the TSI thereby allowing many the chance to apply for and attend college.

There is no known opposition to this bill at this time.

As proposed, S.B. 384 amends current law relating to the scheduling of the administration of certain postsecondary readiness assessment instruments to public high school students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 39.0238(c), Education Code, as follows:

(c) Requires the State Board of Education (SBOE), in adopting a schedule for the administration of postsecondary readiness assessment instruments under this section (Adoption and Administration of Postsecondary Readiness Assessment Instruments), to make all reasonable efforts to schedule end-of-course assessment instruments as required by Section 39.023(c) (relating to requiring the Texas Education Agency to adopt certain end-of-course assessment instruments) so that the administration of those assessment instruments does not conflict with the administration of a nationally recognized assessment instrument, examination, or test administered under a uniform schedule and used by institutions of higher education to award course credit based on satisfactory performance on the assessment instrument, examination, or test, including an advanced placement test or international baccalaureate examination. Deletes existing text requiring SBOE, in adopting a schedule for the administration of postsecondary readiness assessment instruments, to require the annual administration of the postsecondary readiness assessment instruments to occur not earlier than the second full week in May.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.