

**SUBJECT:** Revising higher education Success Initiative

**COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 6 ayes — Branch, Castro, D. Howard, Johnson, Lewis, Patrick  
0 nays  
3 absent — Alonzo, Bonnen, Brown

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 4 — 31-0

**WITNESSES:** For — Bill Hammond, Texas Association of Business; Leslie Helmcamp, Center for Public Policy Priorities; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Rey Garcia, Texas Association of Community Colleges; Justin Yancy, Governor’s Business Council)  
  
Against — None  
  
On — David Gardner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

**BACKGROUND:** Sec. 51.3062 of the Education Code governs the higher education Success Initiative. Under the provision, higher education institutions are required to assess the academic skills of each entering undergraduate student to determine the student’s ability to enroll in freshman-level courses. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) must designate assessment instruments to assist institutions in measuring student readiness. The board must prescribe standards for the assessment instruments that reflect student readiness. An institution of higher education may adopt more stringent assessment standards.

Each higher education institution may refer a student to developmental coursework as considered necessary to address the student’s deficiencies in readiness to perform freshman-level academic coursework.

Each institution must determine when a student is ready to perform freshman-level academic coursework. The institution must make its determination on an individual basis according to each student’s needs.

The determination must include requiring a student to retake an assessment instrument or another board-approved means of evaluating student readiness.

DIGEST:

SB 1564 would add a section to the Success Initiative provision to define “program evaluation” as a systematic method of collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer questions about the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of developmental education courses, interventions, and policies.

The bill would require THECB to set a single standard or set of standards for each assessment instrument. The bill would remove the authority of institutions to adopt more stringent assessment standards.

SB 1564 would require institutions that required a student to enroll in developmental coursework to offer a range of developmental coursework, including online courses. The developmental coursework would have to be based on research-based best practices that included:

- assessment;
- differentiated placement and instruction;
- faculty development;
- support services;
- program evaluation;
- technology integration with an emphasis on instructional support programs;
- noncourse-based developmental education interventions; and
- pairing of developmental education courses with credit-bearing courses.

THECB would have to adopt rules to implement these requirements.

The board would be required to consult with higher education institutions to create and provide professional development programs, including instruction in differentiated instruction methods to address students’ diverse needs, for faculty and staff who taught developmental courses.

SB 1564 would require an institution to base its determination of student readiness using learning outcomes for developmental education courses developed by the board and based on established college and career readiness standards, as well as student performance on one or more appropriate assessments.

The bill would remove the requirement that an institution make each determination on an individual basis and that the determination include requiring a student to retake an assessment instrument or another board-approved means of evaluating student readiness.

SB 1564 would repeal sec. 51.3062(e) of the Education Code, which requires THECB to designate additional assessment instruments to measure college readiness.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2012-13 school year. It would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2011.