

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1343
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Higher Education
9/15/2009
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Students in a four-year institution are required to have 120 credit hours in order to receive their degree. Currently, there is a "30-hour rule" that allows students to take up to 30 extra hours before graduating without being penalized with out-of-state tuition rates. This rule exempts students who have previously earned a baccalaureate degree, allowing them to complete a second degree with possibly more than 150 hours on their transcript. The rule does not, however, exempt students who have previously earned an associate degree, about 66 hours of transferrable coursework.

In Texas, there are 29 Early College high schools and many programs around the state that allow high school students to graduate with an associate degree along with their high school diploma. When these students transfer to a four-year institution, their 66 associate degree hours transfer either toward their baccalaureate degree or as elective hours, depending on the university. Normally, about half of the hours are counted as elective hours, putting students over the 30-extra hours they are allowed to take before being penalized with higher tuition rates by the time they reach junior or senior status.

The purpose of this bill is to add students with associate degrees to the list of exemptions in order for them to be able to continue to four-year institutions without worrying about higher tuition rates toward the end of their college careers.

S.B. 1343 relates to the formula funding for public institutions of higher education for certain credit hours that do not count toward a degree.

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 61.0595(d), Education Code, to provide that certain hours and credits are not counted for purposes of determining whether the student has previously earned the number of semester credit hours specified by Subsection (a), including semester credit hours earned by the student before receiving an associate or baccalaureate degree that has previously been awarded to the student; and credit for a remedial educational course, a technical course, a workforce education course funded according to contact hours, a dual credit course for which the student received credit toward a high school diploma, or another course that does not count toward a degree program at the institution.

SECTION 2. Provides that the change in law made by this Act to Section 61.0595, Education Code, applies beginning with the funding recommendations made under Section 61.059, Education Code, for the 2011-2012 academic year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.