

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1543
By: Perry et al.
Higher Education
6/18/2015
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Section 52.9241, Education Code (commonly known as the General Standards statute), states, "Because the State of Texas considers successful completion of a nontraditional secondary education to be equivalent to graduation from a public high school, an institution of higher education must treat an applicant for admission to the institution as an undergraduate student who presents evidence that the person has successfully completed a nontraditional secondary education according to the same general standards as other applicants for undergraduate admission who have graduated from a public high school."

Interested parties note that due to a lack of clarity in the statute with regards to class rank, some institutions of higher education have assigned non-traditional students a default class rank below 50 percent. The result of this is that otherwise qualified students are given much higher test score requirements than their peers that have graduated from a traditional high school.

S.B. 1543 aims to clarify the intent of General Standards by adding that a student without a class rank cannot be assigned one that is lower than the average high school class rank by an institution of higher education. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 1543 amends current law relating to the admission of undergraduate students with nontraditional secondary education to public institutions of higher education.

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 51.9241, Education Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d), as follows:

(b) Requires an institution of higher education, because the State of Texas considers successful completion of a nontraditional secondary education to be equivalent to graduation from a public high school, to treat an applicant for admission to the institution as an undergraduate student who presents evidence that the person has successfully completed a nontraditional secondary education according to the same general standards, including specific standardized testing score requirements, as other applicants for undergraduate admission who have graduated from a public high school.

(d) Requires the institution, if an institution of higher education in its undergraduate admission review process sorts applicants by high school graduating class rank, to place any applicant who presents evidence that the applicant has successfully completed a nontraditional secondary education that does not include a high school graduating class ranking at the average high school graduating class rank of undergraduate applicants to the institution who have equivalent standardized testing scores as the applicant.

SECTION 2. Provides that the changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with admissions to a public institution of higher education for the 2016 fall semester. Provides that admissions to a public institution of higher education for a term or semester before the 2016 fall semester are

governed by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2015.