

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2130
By: Powell
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The vast majority of jobs created in the next 20 years will require certificates and degrees beyond a high school credential. Therefore, High School Equivalency (HSE) test takers (with an average age of 26 years old) need to be in a strong position to compete with traditional high school graduates. Welders, plumbers, electricians, software developers, and industrial machinery mechanics are a few of the jobs identified by the Texas Workforce Commission as high growth occupations over the next five years. These jobs will require technical certification or a degree, which three million Texans cannot access without some form of high school equivalency.

Similar to the STAAR test, HSE tests also assess high school equivalency and college and career readiness. Current law allows students with a college ready score on the STAAR, ACT, or SAT to bypass all or part of TSI placement examinations and enroll in credit-bearing courses. Community and/or technical college systems in eight states, and some universities in those states, also accept a college ready score on the HSE in lieu of placement examinations. This bill allows a student who has achieved an English and/or Math college ready score set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on a high school equivalency examination to bypass additional testing required to enroll in a technical school, community college, or university. Eliminating the additional test removes an additional barrier from turning students into skilled workers.

As proposed, S.B. 2130 amends current law relating to an exemption from the assessment requirements of the Texas Success Initiative for students who achieve certain scores on a high school equivalency examination.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of higher education in SECTION 1 (Section 51.338, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 51.338, Education Code, by adding Subsection (h), as follows:

(h) Provides that a student who has achieved a score set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in a content area subject to the standards prescribed by THECB under Section 51.334(b) (relating to requiring each assessment instrument designated by THECB to be diagnostic in nature) on a high school equivalency examination administered under Section 7.111 (High School Equivalency Examinations) is exempt from the requirements of this subchapter (Texas Success Initiative) with respect to that content area. Requires the commissioner of higher education by rule to establish the period for which an exemption under this subsection is valid.

SECTION 2. Provides that the change in law made by this Act applies beginning with the assessment of entering undergraduate students at public institutions of higher education for the 2020 fall semester. Provides that the assessment of an entering undergraduate student for an academic term before that semester is governed by the law in effect before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2019.