

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 200
By: Eckhardt
Subcommittee on Higher Education
3/28/2023
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

If you're a Texas resident and wish to re-enroll in higher education as an undergraduate, you may be able to waive your previous academic record and begin a new course of study with a clear academic record under the current "Academic Fresh Start" law.

If you have credits for college courses taken ten or more years prior to the planned enrollment date, those credits and grades can be waived from consideration for admissions decisions.

This is an all or nothing option. If you choose the "Academic Fresh Start" option, you will not receive any credit for any courses you took over ten years ago. This means that forfeited courses cannot be used to meet prerequisite requirements and will not be applied towards the new degree.

Bill Idea

- S.B. 200 changes the law to allow for college courses taken five (5) years prior to college application under "Academic Fresh Start" to be eliminated from consideration for admissions purposes.
- Also allows students who wish to invoke Fresh Start to keep up to six (6) semester hours toward their degree plan.
- This is a local option which each university MAY choose to utilize, it IS NOT mandatory.

As proposed, S.B. 200 amends current law relating to the period for which an applicant for admission as an undergraduate student to a public institution of higher education is entitled to an academic fresh start.

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 51.931(c), Education Code, as follows:

(c) Provides that, if an applicant elects to seek admission under Section 51.931 (Right to an Academic Fresh Start), a public institution of higher education:

(1) in considering the applicant for admission, is authorized to opt to, rather than is required to, not consider academic course credits or grades earned by the applicant five or more years before, rather than 10 or more years prior to, the starting date of the semester in which the applicant seeks to enroll; and

(2) if the institution enrolls the applicant as a student, is required to award the applicant academic credit for a number of semester credit hours or the equivalent equal to the lesser of:

(A) the number of the semester credit hours or the equivalent earned by the applicant during the period described by Subdivision (1); or

(B) six semester credit hours or the equivalent.

Deletes existing text prohibiting an applicant who makes the election to apply under this section and is admitted as a student from receiving any course credit for courses undertaken 10 or more years prior to enrollment under this section.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.0595(c), Education Code, to make a conforming change.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 51.931(c), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with admissions to a public institution of higher education for the 2023 fall semester.

SECTION 4. Provides that Section 61.0595(c), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with funding recommendations made under Section 61.059 (Appropriations), Education Code, for the state fiscal biennium beginning September 1, 2025, for semester credit hours earned by students enrolling in a baccalaureate degree program at a public institution of higher education under Section 51.931, Education Code, as added by this Act, for the 2023 fall semester or a subsequent semester or term. Provides that funding recommendations for semester credit hours earned by a student who enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a public institution of higher education under Section 51.931, Education Code, as amended by this Act, before the 2023 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 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.