

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 960
By: Shapleigh
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Tens of thousands of students of military families from other states and overseas will relocate to Texas over the next several years due to base realignments and closures and re-basing of active duty service members.

Children of military families generally move from six to nine times during their K-12 school years. Many make multiple moves during their high school years alone, some even during their senior year. Often these students will not know where they will graduate until their junior or senior year due to the service member's variable career progression and transfers. Due to the high number of moves, military students are often part of numerous state education systems, all with different educational requirements, standards, and graduation requirements.

Currently, Texas requires students to meet three criteria to graduate from high school: credit accrual, course requirements, and passing scores on the TAKS test. State law currently allows for students transferring into Texas schools to use their SAT or ACT scores to "test out" of the math and language arts portions of the TAKS exit exams. However, this statute is limited to students who transfer in during the second semester of their senior year of high school, thus affecting a very small number of students.

This bill extends this provision to military dependents in their junior or senior year and requires the Texas Education Agency to establish performance levels that would allow a student to test out of specified portions of the TAKS exit exams.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

This bill relates to the administration of exit-level state assessment instruments to transfer students who are dependents of military personnel.

The bill amends Section 39.025, Education Code, by adding Subsections (f) and (g) to provide that, notwithstanding any other provision of Section 39.025, the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) shall allow a student who is the dependent of a person serving in the military to satisfy the requirements of Subsection (a) of Section 39.025, and qualify for a high school diploma through satisfactory performance on one or more alternative nationally recognized norm-referenced assessment instruments if the student, as a result of a military transfer or deployment of the person serving in the military, transfers into the public school system of this state after completion of the student's sophomore year in high school. The commissioner shall establish required performance levels for the alternative assessment instrument or instruments that correspond to the performance levels otherwise required under Subsection (a) of Section 39.025 on the secondary exit-level assessment instruments for English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

The bill provides that Section 39.025, Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with students enrolled in public high schools in this state as juniors or seniors during the 2006-2007 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

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