

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3296
By: Castro
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, created the Texas Success Initiative to replace the Texas Academic Skills Program. The success initiative requires each incoming college student to be assessed on the student's college-readiness in a number of academic areas unless a student qualifies for an exemption. If a higher education institution finds that a student does not meet the requirements for college-readiness, the student is placed in a noncredit-bearing developmental education course, to bring the student's skills up to the level required to undertake freshman-level courses in that subject.

Developmental courses, which are prerequisites for credit-bearing courses, often are offered only in full semester schedules. In some cases, this results in a student spending up to two years paying for and taking noncredit-bearing classes to become prepared to take a college-level course. Some institutions of higher education offer these developmental courses in a compressed format that allows a student to gain college-readiness skills quickly and begin taking credit-bearing courses leading to graduation.

C.S.H.B. 3296 requires an institution of higher education to offer developmental courses in a compressed or intensive schedule to certain students identified as needing remedial education under the Texas Success Initiative.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3296 amends the Education Code to require an institution of higher education that requires a student to enroll in developmental coursework to offer the student the option of enrolling in developmental coursework in an intensive or compressed course-based format that, to the extent possible, allows the student to enroll in developmental courses without substantially conflicting with other coursework or the student's overall academic progress if under rules of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board the student is determined to be eligible to enroll in developmental courses offered in that format.

C.S.H.B. 3296 requires the coordinating board to adopt rules prescribing student eligibility criteria for enrolling in an intensive or compressed course-based format and to adopt requirements for approving the use of an intensive or compressed course-based format.

C.S.H.B. 3296 makes its provisions applicable beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 3296 differs from the original by requiring an institution of higher education that requires a student to enroll in developmental coursework to offer the student the option of enrolling in developmental coursework that applies to such coursework in an intensive or compressed course-based format, that, to the extent possible, allows the student to enroll in developmental courses without substantially conflicting with other coursework or the student's overall academic progress, whereas the original does not specify a course-based format, nor does the original qualify the requirement that such coursework allow, to the extent possible, a student to enroll in developmental courses without the conflicts cited in the bill. The substitute adds a provision not in the original conditioning a student's enrollment in developmental courses offered in the intensive or compressed format on the student's eligibility to do so under Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rules.

C.S.H.B. 3296 adds a provision not in the original requiring the coordinating board to adopt rules prescribing student eligibility criteria for enrolling in an intensive or compressed course-based format and requirements for approving the use of an intensive or compressed course-based format.