

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 162
By: Shapiro
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

ACT recently estimated that only 20 percent of Texas' high school seniors are college ready and according to data collected at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), only 56 percent of students who attempt developmental education courses actually complete or pass these courses. Taken together, this means that 80 percent of students need developmental education to succeed in college and only half of those students pass those courses. Developmental education has traditionally been administered at community colleges, technical colleges, or four-year institutions without taking into account the best practices to most efficiently and effectively help students. The current system is not succeeding at helping students in the areas where they need help.

S.B. 162 amends current law by requiring THECB to develop a statewide plan that will focus on community college delivery of developmental education. The plan will focus on utilizing technology to individualize plans for each student and to reach a greater number of students. THECB will also study and develop best practices for successful programs to effectively educate students. The plan will be updated and modified periodically to account for updated educator training and improving programs.

S.B. 162 amends current law relating to developing a developmental education plan for students entering public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.07611, as follows:

Sec. 61.07611. DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PLAN; REPORT. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), to serve students who require developmental education in an effective and cost-effective manner, to develop a statewide plan for developmental education to be provided under Section 51.3062 (Success Initiative) that:

- (1) assigns primary responsibility for developmental education to public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes; and
- (2) provides for using technology, to the greatest extent practicable consistent with best practices, to provide developmental education to students.

(b) Requires THECB, in developing the developmental education plan, to:

- (1) research relevant issues related to developmental education;

(2) study and develop best practices for successful developmental education programs, including through use of pilot programs; and

(3) assess various methods of providing developmental education to students to determine which methods, if any, should be implemented on a statewide basis.

(c) Requires that the developmental education under the plan include:

(1) technological delivery of developmental education courses that allows students to complete course work;

(2) diagnostic assessments to determine a student's specific educational needs to allow for appropriate developmental instruction;

(3) modular developmental education course materials;

(4) use of tutors and instructional aides to supplement developmental education course instruction as needed for particular students;

(5) an internal monitoring mechanism to identify a student's area of academic difficulty;

(6) periodic updates of developmental education course materials; and

(7) assessments after completion of a developmental education course to determine a student's readiness to enroll in freshman-level academic courses.

(d) Requires that the developmental education plan provide for:

(1) ongoing training for developmental education program faculty members, tutors, and instructional aides at the institutions or other locations where those persons provide instruction; and

(2) ongoing research and improvement of appropriate developmental education programs, including participation by a group of institution of higher education faculty members selected by THECB to monitor results of the programs, identify successful and unsuccessful program components and identify possible solutions to program problems.

(e) Requires THECB, not later than December 1, 2012, to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and presiding officer of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education a report concerning the initial development of the developmental education plan under this section, including any recommendations for redesign or reassignment among institutions of higher education of existing programs or implementation of new programs and, if appropriate, recommendations for legislation. Provides that this subsection expires January 1, 2013.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2011.