

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 4848  
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Education K-16  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The bill author has informed the committee that, as higher education costs continue to rise, Texas students and families are increasingly looking for degree pathways that are both affordable and flexible and that competency-based education (CBE) is an innovative approach that allows students to progress through coursework based on their ability to master a subject, rather than on the amount of time spent in a traditional classroom. Moreover, the bill author has informed the committee that this model offers flexibility for students who may already have real-world experience and who are working full-time, raising families, or seeking to reskill and upskill in a rapidly changing job market. The bill author has further informed the committee that, even though some institutions in Texas already offer CBE degrees, access remains limited and availability varies widely by region and institution and that CBE programs are not always aligned with high-demand careers in Texas. The cost of these programs can be a barrier to entry for many students, and expanding access to affordable CBE pathways could improve completion rates, reduce student loan debt, and better prepare students for Texas' growing workforce needs. H.B. 4848 seeks to address these issues by requiring each public higher education system in Texas to ensure one or more of its institutions offers competency-based baccalaureate degree programs in high-demand fields and by ensuring that these programs are affordable by capping their total cost to a student at \$10,000, with an annual adjustment for inflation.

H.B. 4848 amends current law relating to requiring that competency-based baccalaureate degree programs be offered at certain public institutions of higher education.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 51.3535, Education Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter G, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.3535, as follows:

Sec. 51.3535. RESPONSIBILITY OF SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION REGARDING COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION. (a) Defines "competency-based baccalaureate degree program" and "coordinating board."

(b) Requires the university system administration of each system, subject to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) approval under Section 61.0512 (Board Approval of Academic Programs), to ensure that one or more institutions of higher education in the system offer competency-based baccalaureate degree programs in each field of study in high demand, as determined by THECB rule.

(c) Prohibits a competency-based baccalaureate degree program offered under this section, subject to adjustment under Subsection (d), from exceeding a total cost to an enrolled student of an amount equal to one-half of the average cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, as determined by THECB rule.

(d) Requires THECB, beginning with the 2027–2028 academic year, to annually adjust the limit described by Subsection (c) for the preceding academic year by the rate of inflation for the preceding academic year, as determined on the basis of changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor.

(e) Authorizes THECB to adopt rules as necessary to administer this section.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 51.3535, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2026–2027 academic year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.