

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R8574 CXP-D

H.B. 5294
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Education K-16
5/16/2025
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

H.B. 5294 addresses growing concerns that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) ideology continues to influence medical education in Texas despite prior legislative efforts to limit its scope. Policymakers have raised alarms that admissions practices, grading systems, and course content in some Texas medical schools are quietly shifting away from merit-based standards. This erosion of academic rigor could jeopardize the preparation and evaluation of future physicians and diminish public confidence in the competence of graduates.

Pass/fail grading systems, removal of standardized test requirements, and vague evaluation criteria hinder transparency and obscure meaningful distinctions in student performance. H.B. 5294 seeks to restore academic excellence and ensure that medical school admissions and assessments are based on objective, meritocratic standards.

H.B. 5294 amends current law relating to medical school admissions, coursework, academic standards, and employment decisions in this state.

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 Subchapter F, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.3095, as follows:

Sec. 51.3095. CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION COURSEWORK AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS REVISIONS. (a) Defines "medical school."

(b) Provides that each medical school is:

(1) required to ensure that any coursework offered in the curriculum required for a medical degree or certificate assesses a student's performance on the coursework based on the assignment of a letter grade from A to F; and

(2) prohibited from offering coursework described by Subdivision (1), including any assignment or other component of the coursework, on a pass/fail basis.

(c) Prohibits a medical school, except as required to comply with state or federal law, from revising its academic standards for the award of a degree or certificate unless the medical school submits to the legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) a copy of the proposed standards, a concise general statement of the reasons for the proposed standards, and the date on which the proposed standards would become effective.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter W, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.8425, as follows:

Sec. 51.8425. CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSION. (a) Defines "medical school."

(b) Requires a medical school, in making admissions decisions for a medical degree or certificate program, to consider an applicant's performance on a standardized test appropriate for the program that focuses on knowledge of and critical thinking applicable to science and medical practice, except that the applicant's performance on the standardized test is prohibited from being used as the sole criterion for consideration of the applicant.

(c) Prohibits a medical school, except as required to comply with state or federal law, from revising its academic standards for the admission of a student to the medical school or to a degree or certificate program unless the medical school submits to the legislature and THECB a copy of the proposed standards, concise general statement of the reasons for the proposed standards, and the date on which the proposed standards would become effective.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.9247, as follows:

Sec. 51.9247. CONSIDERATION OF RACE, SEX, COLOR, ETHNICITY, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN IN MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS PROHIBITED. (a) Defines "medical school."

(b) Prohibits a medical school, notwithstanding any other provision of law, from granting preference on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin to an applicant for admission to the medical school or to a degree or certificate program or for employment by the medical school.

(c) Prohibits anything in this section from being construed as prohibiting bona fide qualifications based on sex that are reasonably necessary to the normal operation of a medical school.

SECTION 4. Provides that the changes in law made by this Act to admissions at medical schools apply beginning with admissions for the 2026 spring semester.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.