

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2847
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Education K-16
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 2847 addresses the need for greater flexibility and innovation in the structure of core curricula at Texas institutions of higher education in order to accelerate the awarding of bachelor's degrees, particularly in workforce-aligned programs.

The current Texas Education Code requires that each institution of higher education adopt a 42 semester credit hour core curriculum. While this framework provides consistency and ensures a well-rounded education, it may unintentionally lengthen the time to degree completion, especially for students pursuing workforce-oriented bachelor's programs that prioritize applied, technical, or specialized training over broad general education. As Texas works to meet growing workforce demands, there is a need to allow more streamlined academic pathways that focus on career readiness and faster degree attainment.

Under current law (Section 61.822, Education Code), all institutions of higher education must offer a core curriculum of 42 semester credit hours, unless a different structure is approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The law allows for a reduced core curriculum only for associate degree programs, not for bachelor's degree programs.

S.B. 2847 amends Section 61.822 to authorize THECB to approve core curricula of fewer than 42 semester credit hours for bachelor's degree programs if the reduction would help accelerate student completion of "workforce-aligned credentials," as defined by THECB rule. This change enables institutions to design more flexible and targeted bachelor's programs that emphasize job-relevant skills and reduce time to graduation, while still retaining essential academic components. The bill preserves transferability protections and ensures that completed core curriculum coursework remains portable between institutions.

In summary, S.B. 2847 provides a strategic opportunity to modernize Texas' higher education framework by aligning academic structures more closely with workforce needs while maintaining quality and transferability across institutions.

As proposed, S.B. 2847 amends current law relating to innovations in core curriculum to accelerate the award of bachelor's degrees.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 61.822, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 61.822 (b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Makes no changes to this subsection.

(b-1) Authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) by rule to approve a core curriculum of fewer than 42 semester credit hours for a bachelor's degree program at an institution of higher education if THECB determines that the approval

would accelerate student completion of workforce aligned credentials, as defined by THECB rule.

(c)-(e) Makes no changes to these subsections.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.