

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 960
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S/C on Base Realignment & Closure
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Tens of thousands of students of military families from other states and overseas will relocate to Texas over the next several years due to base realignments and closures and re-basing of active duty service members.

Children of military families generally move from six to nine times during their K-12 school years. Many make multiple moves during their high school years alone, some even during their senior year. Often these students will not know where they will graduate until their junior or senior year due to the servicemember's variable career progression and transfers. Due to the high number of moves, military students are often part of numerous state education systems, all with different educational requirements, standards, and graduation requirements. However, a non-mobile child in the state of Texas will have the opportunity to build the educational foundation needed to meet the graduation requirements from high school. When a student in Texas starts his or her first day of school, he or she is prepared for the curriculum standards required for high school graduation.

Currently, Texas requires students to meet three criteria to graduate from high school: credit accrual, course requirements, and passing scores on the TAKS test. State law currently allows for students transferring into Texas schools to use their SAT or ACT scores to "test out" of the math and language arts portions of the TAKS exit exams. However, this statute is limited to students who transfer in during the second semester of their senior year of high school, thus affecting a very small number of students.

As proposed, S.B. 960 extends this provision to military dependents in their junior or senior year and requires the Texas Education Agency to establish performance levels that would allow a student to test out of the social studies and science portions of the TAKS exit exams.

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 Section 39.025, Education Code, by adding Subsections (f) and (g), as follows:

(f) Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to allow a student who is the dependent of a person serving in the military to satisfy the requirements of Subsection (a) and qualify for a high school diploma through satisfactory performance on one or more alternative nationally recognized norm-referenced assessment instruments if the student, as a result of a military transfer or deployment of the person serving in the military, transfers into the public school system of Texas after completion of the student's sophomore year in high school, notwithstanding any other provision of this section.

(g) Requires the commissioner, for purposes of Subsection (f), to establish required performance levels for the alternative assessment instrument or instruments that correspond to the performance levels otherwise required under Subsection (a) on the secondary exit-level assessment instruments for certain subjects in order to ensure that a

student described by that subsection may satisfy the requirements of Subsection (a) solely through performance on certain assessment instruments.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 39.025, Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with students enrolled in public high schools in this state as juniors or seniors during the 2006-2007 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.