

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 976
By: West
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, a private or independent college or university must be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to participate in the Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) program. In some instances, and for various reasons, a private or independent college or university may lose its SACS accreditation. If a private or independent college or university is on track to restore its SACS accreditation, it should be granted temporary approval to continue participating in the TEG program while it seeks accreditation.

S.B. 976 grants temporary approval to historically black private or independent colleges or universities that previously qualified to participate in the TEG program, but have lost accredited status. To qualify, the institution must be working toward SACS re-accreditation. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may grant temporary approval for a period of two years and may renew the approval only once. If in that four-year period the institution has not regained SACS accreditation, the institution may no longer receive temporary approval to participate in the TEG program.

As proposed, S.B. 976 amends current law relating to the temporary approval of an institution to participate in the tuition equalization grant program.

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 61.222, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.222. APPROVED INSTITUTIONS. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to approve only those private or independent colleges or universities that are private or independent institutions of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions) or are located within this state and meet the same program standards and accreditation as public institutions of higher education as determined by THECB.

(b) Authorizes THECB to temporarily approve a private or independent institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 that previously qualified under Subsection (a) but no longer holds the same accreditation as public institutions of higher education. Requires an institution, to qualify under this subsection, to be:

- (1) accredited by an accreditor recognized by THECB;
- (2) actively working toward the same accreditation as public institutions of higher education;
- (3) participating in the federal financial aid program under 20 U.S.C. Section 1070a; and

(4) a "part B institution" as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1061(2) and listed in 34 C.F.R. Section 608.2.

(c) Authorizes THECB to grant temporary approval for a period of two years and to renew the approval once.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.