

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R26149 JRJ-D

C.S.H.B. 885
By: Harris et al. (Birdwell)
Higher Education
5/19/2021
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under current Texas law, in determining whether a public junior college may offer a baccalaureate degree program and what degree programs may be offered, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) shall apply the same criteria and standards the coordinating board uses to approve baccalaureate degree programs at general academic teaching institutions and medical and dental units. THECB must also consider (1) the workforce need for the degree programs in the region served by the junior college; (2) how those degree programs would complement the other programs and course offerings of the junior college and whether the associate degree program offered by the junior college in the same field has been successful; (3) whether those degree programs would unnecessarily duplicate the degree programs offered by other institutions of higher education; and (4) the ability of the junior college to support the degree programs with student enrollment and the adequacy of the junior college's facilities, faculty, administration, libraries, and other resources.

Additionally, a public junior college may offer a baccalaureate degree program only if its junior college district had a taxable property valuation of no less than \$6 billion in the preceding year and received a positive assessment of the overall financial health of the district as reported by the coordinating board.

Navarro College currently offers a two-year RN Program on their Corsicana and Waxahachie campuses, and has all the infrastructure in place and the fiscal means to establish and operate a BSN program.

The committee substitute for H.B. 885 revises the language to include a threshold of a taxable property valuation of not less than \$4 billion, and replaces "Navarro College" with a junior college in a county that does not have a four-year institution in the same county.

C.S.H.B. 885 amends current law relating to the requirements for a junior college district to receive approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

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 130.307, Education Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (b-1), as follows:

(b) Authorizes a public junior college, except as provided by Subsection (b-1), to offer a baccalaureate degree program under Subchapter L (Baccalaureate Degree Programs) only if its junior college district:

(1) had a taxable property valuation amount of not less than \$6 billion in the preceding year; and

(2) received a positive assessment of the overall financial health of the district as reported by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Makes a nonsubstantive change.

(b-1) Provides that the requirement of Subsection (b)(1) does not apply to a public junior college for the purpose of offering a baccalaureate degree program in nursing approved under Section 130.308 (Special Requirements for Nursing Degree Program) if its junior college district has a taxable property valuation amount of not less than \$4 billion in the preceding year and does not have a four-year institution of higher education located in a county in which the district is located.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.