

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

Senate Committee on Education

REVENUE: No revenue impact**FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued****Action:****Vote:****Yeas:****Nays:****Exc.:****Prepared By:** Gretchen Engbring, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 4/30, 5/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and State Board of Education (SBE) to oversee work group to examine and recommend effective processes and strategies for placing students in courses at community colleges. Specifies who work group must include. Requires preliminary report to Legislative Assembly no later than February 1, 2016 and final report no later than September 15, 2016. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need to determine potential role of Smarter Balanced assessments to help place students in courses
- Negative impact on students who are placed in courses below their level
- Individuals who have been away from academic setting (e.g., adult or professional students) may not test as well
- Potential to place students in “short courses” to briefly review key concepts before placing them in more advanced course
- Teacher recommendations may be more accurate than placement tests

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND: Community colleges routinely test prospective students who wish to enroll in courses with reading, writing or math prerequisites. Some studies have indicated that the tests used for such purposes are not a reliable indicator of student readiness.

House Bill 2681-A requires the HECC and the SBE to oversee a work group jointly convened to address this issue. The work group is to include in its deliberations the possibility of using a statewide summative assessment for students entering community college directly from high school.