

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
81R956 CAS-D

S.B. 195  
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Higher Education  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Recently, the Governor's Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competiveness released a report examining how to make Texas competitive again. The report found:

"Texas is not globally competitive. The state faces a downward spiral in both quality of life and economic competitiveness if it fails to educate more of its growing population (both young and adults) to higher levels of attainment, knowledge and skills. The rate at which educational capital is currently being developed is woefully inadequate."

Producing this educational capital requires the state to focus on improving higher education graduation rates, which are woefully low. One step in that process is ensuring that students have access to a clear picture in terms of the courses required to graduate and how they will pay for them.

S.B. 195 creates a one-stop Internet website for a student to see all of the student's educational financial information, including how much the student owes for the current semester, how much is currently being paid for with grants, scholarships, or loans, and the status of any financial aid. The website would also allow a student to check his or her academic status on the same location, with information such as how many hours the student is currently enrolled in, what classes the student has completed, at both the student's current school and any transferred hours, and information about courses the student is required to complete for graduation.

As proposed, S.B. 195 amends the Education Code to require all institutions of higher education to provide an online portal for students to obtain information about their finances and academic status.

### **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 Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.973, as follows:

Sec. 51.973. STUDENT INTERNET ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AND ACADEMIC INFORMATION. Requires each institution of higher education (institution), in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and to the extent the institution is legally authorized to provide access to relevant information, to provide a method by which each student enrolled in the institution may access, through the institution's Internet website:

- (1) the student's current financial status, including any amount of tuition or fees the student owes; certain financial aid available specifically to the student through the institution's financial aid office, including the applicable amount of aid; and any amount of money the student owes on a student financial aid loan the student received through the institution's financial aid office; and

(2) the student's current academic status, including a list of the courses in which the student is currently enrolled; a list of the courses that the student has completed at the institution or at another institution for which the institution has granted or will grant the student course credit, and the grade assigned for each course; and information concerning the required and elective courses, including the number of semester credit hours, that the student must complete for the student's degree plan.

SECTION 2. Requires THECB to adopt guidelines as required by Section 51.973, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2010. Requires each institution to provide a method by which the institution's students may access financial and academic information as required by that section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.