

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R5486 KJM-D

S.B. 1801
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
4/13/2009
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There is no mandate that all public institutions of higher education hold orientation programs for new students. This bill would ensure that orientation programs are provided to all new students who enroll at institutions of higher education.

As proposed, S.B. 1801 requires an institution of higher education to provide an orientation program for each student, including a student transferring to the institution, before or during the first semester or other academic term in which the student is enrolled at the institution. The bill requires each orientation program to include certain elements.

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 51.978, as follows:

Sec. 51.978. ORIENTATION PROGRAM. (a) Defines "institution of higher education."

(b) Requires an institution of higher education to provide an orientation program for each student, including a student transferring to the institution, before or during the first semester or other academic term in which the student is enrolled at the institution.

(c) Authorizes each institution of higher education to determine the format and length of and attendance requirements for the orientation program that the institution provides under this section, except that the program is required to include counseling regarding the degree and professional programs offered by the institution; the student's post-graduation goals, including career goals; and transferring to a four-year institution, if the institution offers only lower-division courses.

(d) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide online resources to assist an institution of higher education in the development and implementation of an orientation program. Requires that the resources focus on programs that have proven successful in improving the retention of students at institutions of higher education.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 51.978, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the students admitted to an institution of higher education for the 2010 fall semester.

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