

By: Watson

S.B. No. 1764

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the dissemination of information regarding the cost of
3 attending public and private institutions of higher education and
4 regarding the availability of financial aid to assist in paying
5 that cost.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

7 SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
8 amended by adding Section 61.0777 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 61.0777. UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR PUBLICATION OF COST OF
10 ATTENDANCE INFORMATION. (a) The board shall prescribe uniform
11 standards intended to ensure that information regarding the cost of
12 attendance at institutions of higher education and at private or
13 independent institutions of higher education approved under
14 Subchapter F to receive tuition equalization grant funds is
15 available to the public in a manner that is consumer-friendly and
16 readily understandable to prospective students and their families.
17 In developing the standards, the board shall examine common and
18 recommended practices regarding the publication of such
19 information and shall solicit recommendations and comments from
20 institutions of higher education and affected private or
21 independent institutions of higher education.

22 (b) The uniform standards must:

23 (1) address all of the elements that constitute the
24 total cost of attendance, including tuition and fees, room and

1 board costs, book and supply costs, transportation costs, and other
2 personal expenses; and

3 (2) prescribe model language to be used to describe
4 each element of the cost of attendance.

5 (c) Each institution of higher education and each private or
6 independent institution of higher education approved under
7 Subchapter F to receive tuition equalization grant funds that
8 offers an undergraduate degree or certificate program shall:

9 (1) prominently display on the institution's Internet
10 website in accordance with the uniform standards prescribed under
11 this section information regarding the cost of attendance at the
12 institution by a full-time entering first-year student; and

13 (2) conform to the uniform standards in any electronic
14 or printed materials intended to provide to prospective
15 undergraduate students information regarding the cost of
16 attendance at the institution.

17 (d) Institutions described by Subsection (c) shall consider
18 the uniform standards prescribed under this section when providing
19 information to the public or to prospective students regarding the
20 cost of attendance at the institution by nonresident students,
21 graduate students, or students enrolled in professional programs.

22 (e) The board shall prescribe requirements for an
23 institution described by Subsection (c) to provide on the
24 institution's Internet website consumer-friendly and readily
25 understandable information regarding student financial aid
26 opportunities. The required information must be provided in
27 connection with the information displayed under Subsection (c)(1)

1 and must include a link to the primary federal student financial aid
2 Internet website intended to assist persons applying for student
3 financial aid.

4 (f) The board shall provide on the board's Internet website
5 a program or similar tool that will compute for a person accessing
6 the website the estimated net cost of attendance for a full-time
7 entering first-year student attending an institution described by
8 Subsection (c). The board shall require each of those institutions
9 to provide the board with the information the board requires to
10 administer this subsection.

11 (g) The board shall prescribe the initial standards and
12 requirements under this section not later than January 1, 2010.
13 Institutions of higher education shall comply with the standards
14 and requirements not later than April 1, 2010. This subsection
15 expires January 1, 2011.

16 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.