

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R7944 JTZ-F

S.B. 2068
By: Bettencourt
Education
4/25/2023
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Today, many students enroll in colleges and universities with scholastic and career expectations that institutions fail to live up to. This can result in students with student loan debt with little ability to repay the debt.

S.B. 2068 seeks to increase transparency in higher education and aims to provide important information to students as they make critical decisions when deciding on their higher education plans. One solution is providing transparency on college outcomes to high school students before they go to college.

S.B. 2068 will increase transparency by requiring the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to prepare information comparing institutions of higher education in Texas and post the information on TEA's Internet website pertaining items such as the cost of tuition and fees, median cost of room and board, median student loan debt, estimated monthly student loan payment, percentage of students who repay their loans in ten years, and educational outcomes for students such as students returning after their first year, completion and graduation rates, and the percentage of program completers employed in a related field after graduation.

Further, the bill requires institutions of higher education to review the information related to an admitted student's preferred credential or degree with the student before he or she enrolls in a particular credential or degree program.

As proposed, S.B. 2068 amends current law relating to the information maintained by the Texas Education Agency regarding postsecondary education and career opportunities.

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 7.040, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (c) and adding Subsection (a-1), as follows:

(a) Requires that the information prepared under Section 7.040 (Postsecondary Education and Career Opportunities) be given to any public or private school student who requests the information. Requires that the information:

(1) makes no change to this subdivision;

(2) assist prospective postsecondary students in assessing the value of a certificate program, associate or baccalaureate degree program, or other credential program offered by an institution of higher education by comparing each institution, rather than each institution of higher education, with other institutions regarding:

(A) the relative cost of obtaining the certificate, degree, or other credential, including:

(i) the total cost of attendance, based on the most recent data released through the United States Department of Education's College Scorecard online tool or a successor tool;

(ii) the total cost of tuition and fees;

(iii) the median cost of room and board;

(iv) the median student debt of students who graduated with the certificate, degree, or other credential from the institution as compared to the median student debt of all students who graduated with the certificate, degree, or other credential, based on the most recent data released through the United States Department of Education's College Scorecard online tool or a successor tool;

(v) the estimated monthly student loan payment, computed using the standard 10-year repayment plan; and

(vi) the percentage of students who fully repay student debt within the standard 10-year repayment period or, if this information is not available for the program, the percentage of students in all certificate programs, degree programs, or other credential programs who fully repay student debt within the standard 10-year repayment period, rather than the relative cost of tuition;

(B) educational outcomes for students, rather than the retention rate of students, seeking the certificate, degree, or other credential, including:

(i) the percentage of students who continue in the program after the first year of study;

(ii) the graduation rate; and

(iii) the percentage of graduates employed in a field related to the certificate program, degree program, or other credential program within one year of graduation; and

(C) the median earnings of graduates, expressed as a yearly amount and as a percentage of median student debt, based on the most recent data released through the United States Department of Education's College Scorecard online tool or a successor tool, rather than the graduation rate of students, the average student debt, the loan repayment rate of students, and the employment rate of students; and

(3)-(4) makes no change to these subdivisions.

(a-1) Requires that the information required under Subsections (a)(2)(A)(i), (iv), and (vi) and (a)(2)(C) be updated each time new data described by that provision is released through the United States Department of Education's College Scorecard online tool or a successor tool.

(c) Requires each institution of higher education to disclose to a student on the student's enrollment in or transfer to a certificate program, associate or baccalaureate degree program, or other credential program at the institution the information posted on TEA's Internet website under Subsection (a) relating to the program. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 2308A.007, Government Code, by adding Subsection (a-1), to require a credential library established under Section 2308A.007 (Credential Library) to include the information described by Section 7.040(a), Education Code.

SECTION 3. (a) Requires TEA, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to update the information required under Section 7.040(a), Education Code, as amended by this Act.

(b) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), as soon as practicable after TEA completes the update required by Subsection (a) of this section, to update the comparative gainful employment data regarding public institutions of higher education required to be maintained by THECB under Sections 51.762(b-1) (relating to requiring that an electronic common admission application form adopted under this section include a prominent link to comparative gainful employment data regarding institutions of higher education, including information described by a certain section on a website maintained by THECB using data compiled by the board in coordination with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)) and 51.763(b) (relating to requiring that the electronic admission application form for University Systems meet certain requirements), Education Code, to include the information required under Section 7.040(a), Education Code, as amended by this Act.

(c) Requires THECB and TWC, as soon as practicable after TEA completes the update required by Subsection (a) of this section, to jointly update the credential library established under Section 2308A.007, Government Code, to include the information required under Section 7.040(a), Education Code, as amended by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.