

Section By Section of the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act of 2015

Sec. 1. Short Title.

Sec. 2. This section amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 to ensure the data collection elements of this Act are a part of institutions' Program Participation Agreements.

Sec. 3. This section amends the current Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) reporting standards to add the components of this Act .The completion of all IPEDS surveys, in a timely and accurate manner, is mandatory for all institutions that participate in or are applicants for participation in any Federal financial assistance program authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The completion of the surveys is mandated by 20 USC 1094, Section 487(a)(17) which this section amends.

This section also clarifies that where the metrics reported under this Act overlap with existing reporting requirements, institutions shall not have to report on duplicative metrics. Under current law, institutions must make available extensive information on metrics such as graduations rates, cost of attendance, refund policies, percent of students that receive Pell Grants, educational programs offered, etc. This section eliminates any duplication.

Sec. 4. Institutional Reporting Requirements.

(a) This section clarifies that the Department of Education is authorized to carry out the directives outlined in this Act.

(b) This section adds a new part (Sec. 493E) to the Higher Education Act of 1965.

A description of new Sec. 493E is as follows:

(a) Streamlines current reporting requirements to consolidate existing requirements, where redundant, into the new student-level system created by this Act.

(b) Requires the Secretary of Education to establish, within one year, common definitions and submission standards. The new classifications require that specific outcomes data be broken down by: students that participate in remedial education, students that are degree vs. non-degree seeking or certificate/non-certificate seeking.

(c) Establishes new outcome measures, broken down by both institution and program of study, on:

- The percent of students that receive federal, state, and institutional grant aid or loans by source
- The average amount of total federal loan debt upon graduation
- The average amount of total federal loan debt for students that do not complete a program
- Student transfer rates

- Rates at which students continue on to higher levels of education
- Percent of students that receive the degree level they initially sought

Ensures that the above listed outcome measures are also broken down on the basis of:

- Receipt of Pell Grants
- Receipt of Stafford Loans
- Receipt of GI Bill benefits
- Student status (first-time/full-time, first-time/part-time, non-first-time/full-time, non-first-time/part-time)
- Enrollment intensity (full-time only, part-time only, mixed enrollment status)

Directs the Secretary to make available average median earnings (2 years, 6 years, and 15 years post-completion) and employment metrics broken down by:

- Educational program
- Credential received
- Institution
- State of employment

Directs the Secretary of Education to consult extensively with States in developing the new reporting standards and issue guidelines to institutions of higher education regarding the need to update annual privacy notices to reflect the data collection requirements of this section.

(d) Specifies that:

- The data collected under this Act may not be used for any purpose not specifically authorized.
- No Federal employee, agency, officer, or grant recipient may take action against an individual based on data collected under this system and that personally identifiable information collected shall be immune from legal processes and cannot be admitted as evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding.
- Institutions of higher education may not use the data collected under this Act to take any action against any individual.
- Any individual has the right to request and receive the data collected on that individual's behalf.

(e) States that:

- No personally identifiable information may be publically disclosed under this Act.
- The Secretary of Education must post the aggregate data collected under this section on a website hosted by the Department of Education in a timely and user-friendly manner.
- The Secretary may create and make available to researchers a public use data set that excludes personally identifiable information.
- The Secretary may not sell any data collected under this section.

(f) Creates process to ensure a period of consistent data for evaluation purposes by creating a five year window during which the Department of Education must continue to publish outcomes metrics as they would have been reported under previous law.

- (g)** Creates penalties for unauthorized disclosure of personally identifiable data of both monetary fines and up to five years in prison.
- (h)** Creates a data audit system to ensure quality, validity, and reliability of information and a data governance system to ensure compliance with all federal standards of data quality and individual privacy.
- (i)** References FERPA's definition of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) as the applicable definition of PII for this section.
- (j)** Authorizes such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section for FY2016-2024.