

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH40088-MKa-41 (01/18)

Short Title: High Achieving Tuition Scholarships. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Elmore, McNeill, and Howard (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CREATE THE HIGH ACHIEVING TUITION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TOP-PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTENDING NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Purpose of Program. – There is created the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program. The purposes of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program include the following:

- (1) Encourage higher-performing students at community colleges.
- (2) Utilize the State's educational resources to the fullest.
- (3) Create more educational and career options for students.
- (4) Realize significant cost-savings to the State.
- (5) Develop a more competitive workforce.

SECTION 2. Scholarship Eligibility. – A student shall be eligible to receive a High Achieving Tuition Scholarship if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) In the academic semester prior to enrolling in a community college, graduates with at least a 3.5 unweighted grade point average from either a (i) public high school located in this State or (ii) a nonpublic high school or home school, as defined in Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, located in this State.
- (2) Presents evidence the student is either a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen.
- (3) Qualifies as a resident of this State for tuition purposes, as provided in Article 14 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes.
- (4) Gains admission as a student at a North Carolina community college in a curriculum program.
- (5) Complies with Selective Service registration requirements.
- (6) Affirmatively states the student does not have a felony conviction for a controlled substance offense under Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

SECTION 3. Award of Scholarships. – The State Education Assistance Authority (Authority) shall annually award High Achieving Tuition Scholarships to all eligible students in an amount not to exceed the cost of 16 credit hours of tuition per fall or spring academic semester for a maximum of four academic semesters. The Authority shall require students to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for a scholarship award and shall



1 reduce the amount of the scholarship award for any student by the amount of grants or
2 scholarships received by that student from other State or federal sources. The Authority shall
3 award scholarships to eligible students in the order in which they are received. The Authority shall
4 award scholarships beginning with the fall semester of the 2018-2019 academic year to students
5 graduating from high school in the 2017-2018 school year.

6 **SECTION 4.** Scholarship Renewal. – A scholarship awarded to an eligible student
7 shall be annually renewed if the student demonstrates all of the following:

- 8 (1) A cumulative 3.0 grade point average.
- 9 (2) Completion of a minimum of 30 semester credit hours by the end of the
10 academic year.
- 11 (3) An affirmative statement the student does not have a felony conviction for a
12 controlled substance offense under Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General
13 Statutes.

14 **SECTION 5.** Scholarship Revocation. – A scholarship awarded to an eligible student
15 shall be revoked at the conclusion of the first semester of an academic year for any of the
16 following:

- 17 (1) Failure to maintain a course load of at least 12 credit hours.
- 18 (2) Default or unpaid refund on a student financial aid program.

19 **SECTION 6.** Scholarship Administration. – The Authority shall adopt rules for
20 administration of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program.

21 **SECTION 7.** Course Counseling and Transfer. – Community colleges shall ensure
22 that scholarship recipients are provided counseling and assistance in maintaining the necessary
23 grade point averages and selecting coursework that reflects their educational and career goals. For
24 students planning to enter a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, the State
25 Board of Community Colleges shall ensure that credits earned by those students participating in
26 the program are transferable.

27 **SECTION 8.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors
28 of The University of North Carolina the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for the 2017-2018
29 fiscal year to be allocated to the Authority for administrative costs related to the implementation of
30 the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program. There is appropriated from the General Fund to
31 the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina the sum of two million dollars
32 (\$2,000,000) for the 2018-2019 fiscal year to be allocated to the Authority for administrative costs
33 and award of scholarships. The Authority may use up to five percent (5%) of the appropriated
34 funds for administrative costs associated with the Program. Any unexpended funds for the
35 purposes set forth in this section shall not revert at the end of each fiscal year but shall remain
36 available to award scholarships to eligible students.

37 **SECTION 9.** The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall
38 adopt a policy to permit any student admitted to a constituent institution who receives a High
39 Achieving Tuition Scholarship to defer admission to the constituent institution for two years,
40 beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year. Deferred admission shall be contingent upon the
41 successful completion of an associate's degree and remaining in good standing in the Scholarship
42 Program while enrolled in the community college.

43 **SECTION 10.(a)** For the 2017-2018 school year, the State Board of Education shall
44 direct local boards of education to survey high school students in their senior year who meet the
45 eligibility requirements of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program to determine interest
46 in the program, including numbers of students who intend to apply for the scholarship, and reasons
47 that eligible students may choose not to apply for the scholarship. The State Board of Education
48 shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later than December 15,
49 2017, on the results of this survey.

50 **SECTION 10.(b)** The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and
51 the State Board of Community Colleges shall jointly identify and report to the Joint Legislative

1 Education Oversight Committee by April 1, 2020, on potential issues related to the transition of
2 High Achieving Tuition Scholarship recipients from community college to university enrollment
3 and other recommendations to improve and expand the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship
4 Program.

5 **SECTION 10.(c)** The State Education Assistance Authority shall report annually on
6 or before September 1, beginning in 2019, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee
7 on the implementation of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program. The report shall
8 include at least the following information:

9 (1) Number of students applying for the scholarship, including information about
10 student demographics and geographic location.

11 (2) Number of students awarded the scholarship, including information about
12 student demographics and geographic location, and community college
13 attended.

14 (3) Amount of funds expended for scholarships.

15 (4) Number of students whose scholarships were revoked and reasons for
16 revocation.

17 (5) Other relevant information as determined by the Authority.

18 **SECTION 11.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2017.