

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 HOUSE BILL 1727

By: Moore

6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
8 Access Program; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603,  
9 as amended by Section 1, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70  
10 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 2603), which relates to  
11 eligibility requirements; providing eligibility for  
12 children of certain teachers; defining term; amending  
13 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2605, as last amended by  
14 Section 2, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.  
2024, Section 2605), which relates to student  
agreements; exempting students who are children of  
certain teachers from financial qualification  
determination; defining term; directing the Oklahoma  
State Regents for Higher Education to verify certain  
employment status; providing an effective date; and  
declaring an emergency.

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17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

18 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603, as  
19 amended by Section 1, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024,  
20 Section 2603), is amended to read as follows:

21 Section 2603. A. Except as otherwise provided for in  
22 subsection B of this section and elsewhere in this section, to be  
23 eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
24 Program and to qualify for an award which includes payment of an

amount equivalent to resident tuition or other tuition pursuant to Section 2604 of this title for the first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment, a student shall:

1. Be a resident of this state or be enrolled in a school district located in this state that serves students who reside in both this state and an adjacent state pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-117.1 of this title;

2. Be a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United States. A student who is not a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an award notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3242 of this title.

The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any student who was enrolled in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program prior to the end of the 2006-2007 school year;

3. Have a record of satisfactory compliance with agreements executed pursuant to Section 2605 of this title:

4. a. have graduated within the previous three (3) years

from a high school accredited by the State Board of Education or the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in grades nine through twelve,

1           b. have graduated within the previous three (3) years  
2                         from a high school not accredited by the State Board  
3                         of Education with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point  
4                         average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in  
5                         grades nine through twelve and have achieved a  
6                         composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test, or

7           c. have satisfactorily completed within the previous  
8                         three (3) years an educational program that was  
9                         provided through a means other than a public or  
10                         private school and have achieved a composite score of  
11                         22 or higher on the ACT test;

12           5. Have completed the curricular requirements for admission to

13                 an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

14                 Students shall also have attained a 2.5 grade point average in the

15                 core curriculum courses. Students who attended a high school which

16                 did not offer all the core curriculum courses or students who were

17                 educated by other means and were not offered all the core curriculum

18                 courses shall be allowed to satisfy this curriculum requirement by

19                 participating in a program approved by the Oklahoma State Regents

20                 for Higher Education for remediation of high school curricular

21                 deficiencies;

22           6. Have satisfied admission standards as determined by the

23                 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-time-entering

24                 students for the appropriate type of institution, or, if attending a

1 private institution, have satisfied admission standards as  
2 determined by the private institution. No student participating in  
3 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be admitted into  
4 an institution of higher education by special admission standards;

5       7. Have secured admission to, and enrolled in, an institution  
6 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,  
7 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
8 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal  
9 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning  
10 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
11 this title; and

12       8. a. have established financial need according to the  
13                   provisions of subsection D of Section 2605 of this  
14                   title and standards and provisions promulgated by the  
15                   Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

16       b. if the student was adopted between birth and twelve  
17                   (12) years of age while in the permanent custody of  
18                   the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered  
19                   custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing  
20                   agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as  
21                   defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, have  
22                   established financial need according to the provisions  
23                   of paragraph 1 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this

title and standards and provisions promulgated by the  
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

- c. if the student was adopted between thirteen (13) and seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, have established financial need according to the provisions of paragraph 2 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or
  - d. if the student was placed in the custody of the Department of Human Services at any time during the eighth, ninth, tenth, or eleventh grades and enrolls in the program no later than his or her official date of high school graduation, have established financial need according to the provisions of paragraph 3 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or
  - e. if the student is the child of a certified classroom teacher, as provided for in paragraph 4 of subsection

1                   E of Section 2605 of this title. For the purposes of  
2                   this paragraph, "certified classroom teacher" means  
3                   any certified, full-time teacher who has been employed  
4                   by a public school district in this state for a  
5                   minimum of ten (10) years.

6         B. 1. A student shall be eligible to participate in the  
7         Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an award  
8         which includes payment of an amount equivalent to resident tuition  
9         or other tuition pursuant to Section 2604 of this title for the  
10        first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment if  
11        the student meets all of the following criteria:

- 12                a. is a child of any person killed after January 1, 2000,  
13                in the line of duty in any branch of the United States  
14                Armed Forces or who died after January 1, 2000, as a  
15                result of an injury sustained while in the line of  
16                duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces  
17                and the person who was killed or died filed an  
18                individual or joint Oklahoma income tax return for the  
19                tax year prior to the year during which the person was  
20                killed or died,
- 21                b. is a resident of this state or is enrolled in a school  
22                district located in this state that serves students  
23                who reside in both this state and an adjacent state

1                   pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-  
2                   117.1 of this title,

3                   c. enrolls in an institution within The Oklahoma State  
4                   System of Higher Education prior to reaching the age  
5                   of twenty-one (21),

6                   d. has satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
7                   Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-  
8                   time-entering students for the appropriate type of  
9                   institution, or, if attending a private institution,  
10                  has satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
11                  private institution. No student participating in the  
12                  Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be  
13                  admitted into an institution of higher education by  
14                  special admission standards,

15                  e. has secured admission to, and enrolled in, an  
16                  institution which is a member of The Oklahoma State  
17                  System of Higher Education, a postsecondary  
18                  vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
19                  center school that meets the requirements to be  
20                  eligible for federal student financial aid, or a  
21                  private institution of higher learning located within  
22                  this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
23                  this title, and

1                   f. executes an agreement pursuant to subsection C of  
2                   Section 2605 of this title.

3                 2. A student who is eligible to participate in the program  
4                   pursuant to this subsection shall not be required to meet the  
5                   eligibility requirements set forth in subsection A of this section.

6                 C. To retain eligibility while pursuing the program of higher  
7                   learning in which enrolled, the student shall:

8                 1. Meet the requirements for retention and degree completion as  
9                   established by the institution in which the student is enrolled;

10                2. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic  
11                   progress according to standards of the Oklahoma State Regents for  
12                   Higher Education;

13                3. Maintain satisfactory academic progress as required for  
14                   eligibility for federal Title IV student financial aid programs.

15               The provisions of this paragraph shall become effective for the  
16                   2012-2013 school year;

17               4. Comply with the standards related to maintenance of  
18                   eligibility as promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
19                   Education; and

20               5. Refrain from conduct that leads to expulsion or suspension  
21                   of more than one semester from an institution of higher education.

22               A student who violates the provisions of this paragraph shall  
23                   permanently lose eligibility for program benefits. The provisions  
24                   of this paragraph shall become effective January 1, 2008.

1       D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the  
2 State Board of Career and Technology Education shall promulgate  
3 rules relating to maintenance of eligibility under the Oklahoma  
4 Higher Learning Access Act by a student.

5       E. It is the intent of the Legislature that students in the  
6 ninth grade for the 1992-93 school year who are determined to be  
7 eligible Oklahoma Higher Learning Access students pursuant to the  
8 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act shall be the first students  
9 eligible for benefits from the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Trust  
10 Fund.

11       F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are  
12 authorized to study, develop, and propose criteria for determining  
13 award eligibility based upon the completion of seven semesters of  
14 high school coursework by a student.

15       SECTION 2.       AMENDATORY       70 O.S. 2021, Section 2605, as  
16 last amended by Section 2, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.  
17 2024, Section 2605), is amended to read as follows:

18       Section 2605. A. Each school year, every fifth- through  
19 eleventh-grade student in the public and private schools of this  
20 state and students who are educated by other means and are in the  
21 equivalent of the fifth through eleventh grade shall be apprised,  
22 together with the parent, custodial parent, or guardian of the  
23 student, of the opportunity for access to higher learning under the  
24 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. The Oklahoma State Regents

1 for Higher Education and the State Board of Education shall develop,  
2 promote, and coordinate a public awareness program to be utilized in  
3 making students and parents aware of the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
4 Access Program.

5       B. On a form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
6 Education, every public school district shall designate at least one  
7 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program contact person, who shall be  
8 a counselor or teacher, at each public school site in this state in  
9 which eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade classes are taught.  
10 When requested by the State Regents, the State Board of Education  
11 shall assist the State Regents to ensure the designation of contact  
12 persons. Private schools shall also designate at least one school  
13 official as a contact person. For students who are educated by  
14 other means, a parent or guardian or other person approved by the  
15 State Regents shall be designated the contact person.

16       C. 1. Students who qualify on the basis of financial need  
17 according to subsection D or E of this section or who meet the  
18 eligibility qualification set forth in subparagraph a of paragraph 1  
19 of subsection B of Section 2603 of this title prior to entering the  
20 eleventh grade or prior to reaching the age of sixteen (16) and the  
21 standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents  
22 for Higher Education shall be given the opportunity throughout the  
23 eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade years, for students  
24 enrolled in a public or private school, or between the ages of

1 thirteen (13) and sixteen (16), for students who are educated by  
2 other means, to enter into participation in the program by agreeing  
3 to, throughout the remainder of their school years or educational  
4 program:

- 5 a. attend school or an educational program regularly and  
6 do homework regularly,
- 7 b. refrain from substance abuse,
- 8 c. refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts,
- 9 d. have school work and school records reviewed by  
10 mentors designated pursuant to the program,
- 11 e. provide information requested by the Oklahoma State  
12 Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of  
13 Education, and
- 14 f. participate in program activities.

15 2. Students who meet the eligibility qualification set forth in  
16 subparagraph a of paragraph 1 of subsection B of Section 2603 of  
17 this title after completing the eleventh grade or after reaching the  
18 age of seventeen (17) shall be given the opportunity prior to  
19 reaching the age of twenty-one (21) to enter into participation in  
20 the program and shall execute an agreement with provisions as  
21 determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

22 3. The contact person shall maintain the agreements, which  
23 shall be executed on forms provided by the Oklahoma State Regents  
24 for Higher Education and managed according to regulations

1 promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and  
2 the contact person shall monitor compliance of the student with the  
3 terms of the agreement. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
4 Education are authorized to process student agreements and verify  
5 compliance with the agreements. Students failing to comply with the  
6 terms of the agreement shall not be eligible for the awards provided  
7 in Section 2604 of this title.

8       D. Except as otherwise provided for in subsection E of this  
9 section and except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B  
10 of Section 2603 of this title, a student shall not be found to be in  
11 financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
12 Program if:

13           1. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, or tenth-grade students who  
14 are enrolled in a public or private school or students between the  
15 ages of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by other  
16 means who apply for participation in the program in the 2017-2018  
17 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
18 parent(s) exceeds Fifty-five Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00) per year;

19           2. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade  
20 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students  
21 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated  
22 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the  
23 2021-2022 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the

1 student's parent(s) exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per  
2 year;

3       3. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade  
4 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students  
5 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated  
6 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the  
7 2022-2023 school year:

8           a. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
9              parent(s), who have two or fewer dependent children,  
10             exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year,

11           b. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
12              parent(s), who have three or four dependent children,  
13             exceeds Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) per  
14             year, or

15           c. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
16              parent(s), who have five or more dependent children,  
17             exceeds Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) per year;

18        4. Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year, prior to  
19 receiving any Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award  
20 for any year during which the student is enrolled in an institution  
21 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,  
22 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
23 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal  
24 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning

1 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
2 this title, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
3 parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) per  
4 year.

5 The determination of financial qualification as set forth in  
6 this paragraph shall be based on the income of the student, not the  
7 income of the parent(s), if a student:

- 8 a. is determined to be independent of the student's  
9 parents for federal financial aid purposes,
- 10 b. was in the permanent custody of the Department of  
11 Human Services at the time the student enrolled in the  
12 program, or
- 13 c. was in the court-ordered custody of a federally  
14 recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal  
15 Indian Child Welfare Act, at the time the student  
16 enrolled in the program.

17 The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any student who  
18 has received an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit  
19 award after the 2017-2018 school year; and

20 5. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall review  
21 the determination of financial qualification as set forth in  
22 paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection if the income from taxable  
23 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) includes income  
24 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from

1 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or  
2 disability of the student's parent(s). If the income from taxable  
3 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s), excluding income  
4 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from  
5 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or  
6 disability of the student's parent(s), does not exceed the  
7 limitations set forth by paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection,  
8 the student shall be determined to have met the financial  
9 qualification set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this  
10 subsection.

11       E. 1. A student who was adopted between birth and twelve (12)  
12 years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of  
13 Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private  
14 nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian  
15 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, shall not  
16 be found to be in financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher  
17 Learning Access Program if at the time the student begins  
18 postsecondary education and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
19 Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal adjusted gross  
20 income of the student's parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Fifty Thousand  
21 Dollars (\$150,000.00) per year. The provisions of this paragraph  
22 shall not apply to any student who has received an Oklahoma Higher  
23 Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the 2012-2013 school  
24 year.

1       2. A student who was adopted between thirteen (13) and  
2       seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent custody of the  
3       Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a  
4       licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally  
5       recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child  
6       Welfare Act, shall not be found to be in financial need for purposes  
7       of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program if at the time the  
8       student begins postsecondary education and prior to receiving any  
9       Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal  
10      adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) exceeds Two Hundred  
11      Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) per year. The provisions of this  
12      paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an  
13      Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the  
14      2012-2013 school year.

15       3. A student who was placed in the custody of the Department of  
16       Human Services at any time during the eighth, ninth, tenth, or  
17       eleventh grades and enrolls in the program no later than his or her  
18       official date of high school graduation shall not be found to be in  
19       financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
20       Program if the federal adjusted gross income of the student exceeds  
21       Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year.

22       4. Except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B of  
23       Section 2603 of this title, the determination of financial  
24       qualification as set forth in this subsection shall be based on the

1 income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if the  
2 student is determined to be independent of the student's parent(s)  
3 for federal financial aid purposes. A determination of financial  
4 qualification shall not be required for the student who meets the  
5 criteria set forth in this subsection at the time the student  
6 applies for participation in the program. The provisions of this  
7 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an  
8 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the  
9 2008-2009 school year.

10       5.     a.     A determination of financial qualification is not  
11                    required for a student who is the child of a certified  
12                    classroom teacher at the time the student applies for  
13                    participation in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
14                    Program and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
15                    Learning Access Program benefit award for any year  
16                    during which the student is enrolled in an institution  
17                    which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of  
18                    Higher Education, a postsecondary vocational-technical  
19                    program offered by a technology center school that  
20                    meets the eligibility requirements for federal student  
21                    financial aid, or a private institution of higher  
22                    learning located within this state and accredited  
23                    pursuant to Section 4103 of this title. The Oklahoma  
24                    State Regents for Higher Education shall verify the

1                   full-time employment status of the student's parent(s)  
2                   prior to the student receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
3                   Learning Access Program benefit award. The provisions  
4                   of this paragraph shall apply to eighth-, ninth-, or  
5                   tenth-grade students who are enrolled in a public or  
6                   private school or students between the ages of  
7                   thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by  
8                   other means who apply for participation in the program  
9                   after the 2023-2024 school year, and

10                  b. For the purposes of this paragraph, "certified  
11                   classroom teacher" means any certified, full-time  
12                   teacher who has been employed by a public school  
13                   district in this state for a minimum of ten (10)  
14                   years. The teacher is not required to have been  
15                   employed by the same public school district for ten  
16                   (10) years, and the ten (10) years of employment do  
17                   not have to be consecutive.

18                  F. The financial qualification of a student as set forth in  
19 subsections D and E of this section shall be certified by the  
20 contact person or by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
21 on the agreement form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for  
22 Higher Education. The form shall be retained in the permanent  
23 record of the student and a copy forwarded to the Oklahoma State  
24 Regents for Higher Education.

1       G. Agreements shall be witnessed by the parent, custodial  
2 parent, or guardian of the student, who shall further agree to:

3           1. Assist the student in achieving compliance with the  
4 agreements;

5           2. Confer, when requested to do so, with the school contact  
6 person, other school personnel, and program mentors;

7           3. Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents  
8 for Higher Education or the State Board of Education; and

9           4. Assist the student in completing forms and reports required  
10 for program participation, making applications to institutions and  
11 schools of higher learning, and filing applications for student  
12 grants and scholarships.

13       H. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
14 promulgate rules for the determination of student compliance with  
15 agreements made pursuant to this section.

16       I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
17 designate personnel to coordinate tracking of program records for  
18 the years when students participating in the program are still in  
19 the schools or are being educated by other means, provide staff  
20 development for contact persons in the schools, and provide liaison  
21 with the State Board of Education and local organizations and  
22 individuals participating in the program.

23       J. The school district where an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
24 Program student is enrolled when the student begins participation in

1      the program and any subsequent school district where the student  
2      enrolls shall forward information regarding participation by the  
3      student in the program to a school to which the student transfers  
4      upon the request of the school for the records of the student.

5            K. Students participating in the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
6      Access Program shall provide their Social Security number or their  
7      student identification number used by their school to the Oklahoma  
8      State Regents for Higher Education. The Regents shall keep the  
9      numbers confidential and use them only for administrative purposes.

10         SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

11         SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
12      of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
13      declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
14      be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

15            60-1-10381          AQH          12/02/24

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