

1 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

4 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR

5 HOUSE BILL NO. 1727

By: **Moore, McCane, Munson, and Provenzano**

10 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

11 An Act relating to the Oklahoma Higher Learning
12 Access Program; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603,
13 as amended by Section 1, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70
14 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 2603), which relates to
15 eligibility requirements; providing eligibility for
16 children of certain teachers; defining term; amending
17 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2605, as last amended by
18 Section 2, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
19 2024, Section 2605), which relates to student
20 agreements; exempting students who are children of
21 certain teachers from financial qualification
22 determination; defining term; directing the Oklahoma
23 State Regents for Higher Education to verify certain
24 employment status; providing an effective date; and
 declaring an emergency.

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

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

4 Section 2603. A. Except as otherwise provided for in
5 subsection B of this section and elsewhere in this section, to be
6 eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
7 Program and to qualify for an award which includes payment of an
8 amount equivalent to resident tuition or other tuition pursuant to
9 Section 2604 of this title for the first semester or other academic
10 unit of postsecondary enrollment, a student shall:

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

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

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

23 3. Have a record of satisfactory compliance with agreements
24 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,

- b. have graduated within the previous three (3) years from a high school not accredited by the State Board of Education with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in grades nine through twelve and have achieved a composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test, or
- c. have satisfactorily completed within the previous three (3) years an educational program that was provided through a means other than a public or private school and have achieved a composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test;

5. Have completed the curricular requirements for admission to institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education

20 Students shall also have attained a 2.5 grade point average in the
21 core curriculum courses. Students who attended a high school which
22 did not offer all the core curriculum courses or students who were
23 educated by other means and were not offered all the core curriculum
24 courses shall be allowed to satisfy this curriculum requirement by

1 | participating in a program approved by the Oklahoma State Regents
2 | for Higher Education for remediation of high school curricular
3 | deficiencies;

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

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

18 | 8. a. have established financial need according to the
19 | provisions of subsection D of Section 2605 of this
20 | title and standards and provisions promulgated by the
21 | Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

22 | b. if the student was adopted between birth and twelve
23 | (12) years of age while in the permanent custody of
24 | 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 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

1 subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and
2 standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma
3 State Regents for Higher Education, or
4 e. if the student is the child of a certified classroom
5 teacher, as provided for in paragraph 4 of subsection
6 E of Section 2605 of this title. For the purposes of
7 this paragraph, "certified classroom teacher" means
8 any certified, full-time classroom teacher who has
9 been employed as a teacher in a classroom by a public
10 school district in this state for a minimum of ten
11 (10) years. Certified classroom teacher does not mean
12 a certified teacher who has been employed as a
13 district superintendent, principal, or any other
14 position within the administration of a public school
15 district.

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

22 a. is a child of any person killed after January 1, 2000,
23 in the line of duty in any branch of the United States
24 Armed Forces or who died after January 1, 2000, as a

1 result of an injury sustained while in the line of
2 duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces
3 and the person who was killed or died filed an
4 individual or joint Oklahoma income tax return for the
5 tax year prior to the year during which the person was
6 killed or died,

- 7 b. is a resident of this state or is enrolled in a school
8 district located in this state that serves students
9 who reside in both this state and an adjacent state
10 pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-
11 117.1 of this title,
- 12 c. enrolls in an institution within The Oklahoma State
13 System of Higher Education prior to reaching the age
14 of twenty-one (21),
- 15 d. has satisfied admission standards as determined by the
16 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-
17 time-entering students for the appropriate type of
18 institution, or, if attending a private institution,
19 has satisfied admission standards as determined by the
20 private institution. No student participating in the
21 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be
22 admitted into an institution of higher education by
23 special admission standards,
- 24

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

10 f. executes an agreement pursuant to subsection C of
11 Section 2605 of this title.

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

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

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

19 2. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic
20 progress according to standards of the Oklahoma State Regents for
21 Higher Education;

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

1 The provisions of this paragraph shall become effective for the
2 2012-2013 school year;

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

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

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

11 D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the
12 State Board of Career and Technology Education shall promulgate
13 rules relating to maintenance of eligibility under the Oklahoma
14 Higher Learning Access Act by a student.

15 E. It is the intent of the Legislature that students in the
16 ninth grade for the 1992-93 school year who are determined to be
17 eligible Oklahoma Higher Learning Access students pursuant to the
18 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act shall be the first students
19 eligible for benefits from the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Trust
20 Fund.

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

1 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2605, as
2 last amended by Section 2, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
3 2024, Section 2605), is amended to read as follows:

4 Section 2605. A. Each school year, every fifth- through
5 eleventh-grade student in the public and private schools of this
6 state and students who are educated by other means and are in the
7 equivalent of the fifth through eleventh grade shall be apprised,
8 together with the parent, custodial parent, or guardian of the
9 student, of the opportunity for access to higher learning under the
10 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. The Oklahoma State Regents
11 for Higher Education and the State Board of Education shall develop,
12 promote, and coordinate a public awareness program to be utilized in
13 making students and parents aware of the Oklahoma Higher Learning
14 Access Program.

15 B. On a form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
16 Education, every public school district shall designate at least one
17 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program contact person, who shall be
18 a counselor or teacher, at each public school site in this state in
19 which eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade classes are taught.
20 When requested by the State Regents, the State Board of Education
21 shall assist the State Regents to ensure the designation of contact
22 persons. Private schools shall also designate at least one school
23 official as a contact person. For students who are educated by

1 other means, a parent or guardian or other person approved by the
2 State Regents shall be designated the contact person.

3 C. 1. Students who qualify on the basis of financial need
4 according to subsection D or E of this section or who meet the
5 eligibility qualification set forth in subparagraph a of paragraph 1
6 of subsection B of Section 2603 of this title prior to entering the
7 eleventh grade or prior to reaching the age of sixteen (16) and the
8 standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents
9 for Higher Education shall be given the opportunity throughout the
10 eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade years, for students
11 enrolled in a public or private school, or between the ages of
12 thirteen (13) and sixteen (16), for students who are educated by
13 other means, to enter into participation in the program by agreeing
14 to, throughout the remainder of their school years or educational
15 program:

- 16 a. attend school or an educational program regularly and
17 do homework regularly,
- 18 b. refrain from substance abuse,
- 19 c. refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts,
- 20 d. have school work and school records reviewed by
21 mentors designated pursuant to the program,
- 22 e. provide information requested by the Oklahoma State
23 Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of
24 Education, and

1 f. participate in program activities.

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

9 3. The contact person shall maintain the agreements, which
10 shall be executed on forms provided by the Oklahoma State Regents
11 for Higher Education and managed according to regulations
12 promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and
13 the contact person shall monitor compliance of the student with the
14 terms of the agreement. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
15 Education are authorized to process student agreements and verify
16 compliance with the agreements. Students failing to comply with the
17 terms of the agreement shall not be eligible for the awards provided
18 in Section 2604 of this title.

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

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

7 2. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade
8 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students
9 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated
10 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the
11 2021-2022 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the
12 student's parent(s) exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per
13 year;

14 3. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade
15 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students
16 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated
17 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the
18 2022-2023 school year:

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

22 b. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
23 parent(s), who have three or four dependent children,

1 exceeds Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) per
2 year, or
3 c. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
4 parent(s), who have five or more dependent children,
5 exceeds Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) per year;
6 4. Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year, prior to
7 receiving any Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award
8 for any year during which the student is enrolled in an institution
9 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,
10 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology
11 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal
12 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning
13 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of
14 this title, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
15 parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) per
16 year.

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

- 20 a. is determined to be independent of the student's
21 parents for federal financial aid purposes,
22 b. was in the permanent custody of the Department of
23 Human Services at the time the student enrolled in the
24 program, or

1 c. was in the court-ordered custody of a federally
2 recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal
3 Indian Child Welfare Act, at the time the student
4 enrolled in the program.

5 The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any student who

6 has received an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit
7 award after the 2017-2018 school year; and

8 5. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall review
9 the determination of financial qualification as set forth in
10 paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection if the income from taxable
11 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) includes income
12 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from
13 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or
14 disability of the student's parent(s). If the income from taxable
15 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s), excluding income
16 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from
17 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or
18 disability of the student's parent(s), does not exceed the
19 limitations set forth by paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection,
20 the student shall be determined to have met the financial
21 qualification set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this
22 subsection.

23 E. 1. A student who was adopted between birth and twelve (12)
24 years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of

1 Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private
2 nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian
3 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, shall not
4 be found to be in financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher
5 Learning Access Program if at the time the student begins
6 postsecondary education and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher
7 Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal adjusted gross
8 income of the student's parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Fifty Thousand
9 Dollars (\$150,000.00) per year. The provisions of this paragraph
10 shall not apply to any student who has received an Oklahoma Higher
11 Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the 2012-2013 school
12 year.

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

1 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the
2 2012-2013 school year.

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

10 4. Except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B of
11 Section 2603 of this title, the determination of financial
12 qualification as set forth in this subsection shall be based on the
13 income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if the
14 student is determined to be independent of the student's parent(s)
15 for federal financial aid purposes. A determination of financial
16 qualification shall not be required for the student who meets the
17 criteria set forth in this subsection at the time the student
18 applies for participation in the program. The provisions of this
19 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an
20 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the
21 2008-2009 school year.

22 5. a. A determination of financial qualification is not
23 required for a student who is the child of a certified
24 classroom teacher at the time the student applies for

1 participation in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
2 Program and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher
3 Learning Access Program benefit award for any year
4 during which the student is enrolled in an institution
5 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of
6 Higher Education, a postsecondary vocational-technical
7 program offered by a technology center school that
8 meets the eligibility requirements for federal student
9 financial aid, or a private institution of higher
10 learning located within this state and accredited
11 pursuant to Section 4103 of this title. The Oklahoma
12 State Regents for Higher Education shall verify the
13 full-time employment status of the student's parent(s)
14 prior to the student receiving any Oklahoma Higher
15 Learning Access Program benefit award. The provisions
16 of this paragraph shall apply to eighth-, ninth-, or
17 tenth-grade students who are enrolled in a public or
18 private school or students between the ages of
19 thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by
20 other means who apply for participation in the program
21 after the 2023-2024 school year, and

22 b. For the purposes of this paragraph, "certified
23 classroom teacher" means any certified, full-time
24 classroom teacher who has been employed as a teacher

1 in a classroom by a public school district in this
2 state for a minimum of ten (10) years. The teacher is
3 not required to have been employed by the same public
4 school district for ten (10) years, and the ten (10)
5 years of employment do not have to be consecutive.

6 Certified classroom teacher does not mean a certified
7 teacher who has been employed as a district
8 superintendent, principal, or any other position
9 within the administration of a public school district.

10 F. The financial qualification of a student as set forth in
11 subsections D and E of this section shall be certified by the
12 contact person or by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
13 on the agreement form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for
14 Higher Education. The form shall be retained in the permanent
15 record of the student and a copy forwarded to the Oklahoma State
16 Regents for Higher Education.

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

- 19 1. Assist the student in achieving compliance with the
20 agreements;
- 21 2. Confer, when requested to do so, with the school contact
22 person, other school personnel, and program mentors;
- 23 3. Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents
24 for Higher Education or the State Board of Education; and

1 4. Assist the student in completing forms and reports required
2 for program participation, making applications to institutions and
3 schools of higher learning, and filing applications for student
4 grants and scholarships.

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

8 I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
9 designate personnel to coordinate tracking of program records for
10 the years when students participating in the program are still in
11 the schools or are being educated by other means, provide staff
12 development for contact persons in the schools, and provide liaison
13 with the State Board of Education and local organizations and
14 individuals participating in the program.

15 J. The school district where an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
16 Program student is enrolled when the student begins participation in
17 the program and any subsequent school district where the student
18 enrolls shall forward information regarding participation by the
19 student in the program to a school to which the student transfers
20 upon the request of the school for the records of the student.

21 K. Students participating in the Oklahoma Higher Learning
22 Access Program shall provide their Social Security number or their
23 student identification number used by their school to the Oklahoma

1 State Regents for Higher Education. The Regents shall keep the
2 numbers confidential and use them only for administrative purposes.

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

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

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9 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGET, dated
02/26/2025 - DO PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.

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