

An Act

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1282

By: Caldwell (Chad) of the
House

and

Rader of the Senate

An Act relating to scholarships; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2401, which relates to the Oklahoma State Regents' Academic Scholars Act; renaming act to Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Act; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2402, which relates to the Oklahoma State Regents' Scholars Program; renaming program to Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2403, which relates to eligibility; updating name of program; providing for scholarship awards; limiting amount of scholarship awards; requiring certain institutions provide certain tuition waivers; including tuition in certain scholarships; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2404, which relates to the order to award scholarships; updating program name; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2405, which relates to adoption of rules; updating names; providing for waiver portability; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Sections 2406 and 2407, which relate to the Oklahoma State Regents' Academic Scholars Act; updating names; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

SUBJECT: Scholarships

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2401, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2401. Sections 4 2401 through 10 2407 of this ~~act title~~ shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma ~~State Regents'~~ Academic Rising Scholars Award Act".

SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2402, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2402. A. There is hereby created the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program. The purpose of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program is to retain top-ranked students from Oklahoma in Oklahoma colleges, enable Oklahoma institutions of higher education to compete aggressively for top Oklahoma scholars, attract high-caliber out-of-state students to Oklahoma to attend colleges and universities, and enhance the academic quality in Oklahoma colleges and universities. The program shall provide participants funding for enrollment fees, tuition and other fees, room and board and required textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of undergraduate and/or graduate study at accredited institutions of higher education in Oklahoma.

B. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall administer the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program.

SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2403, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2403. A. No person shall be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program unless the person:

1. Has complied with all of the rules promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Act, Section 2401 et seq. of this title, for the award, regulation, and administration of scholarships; and

2. Qualifies as one of the following:

- a. an Individual Applicant Qualified Student, which shall mean a student who is a resident of the State of Oklahoma whose American College Testing Program score or whose Scholastic Aptitude Test score falls within the 99.5 to 100.0 percentile levels as administered in the State of Oklahoma and whose grade point average and/or class rank is exceptional, as determined by the State Regents,

- b. a Presidential Scholar, which shall mean a student selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars administered by the United States Department of Education,
- c. a National Merit Scholar, which shall mean a student designated as a National Merit Scholar by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation,
- d. a National Merit Finalist, which shall mean a student designated as a National Merit Finalist by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, or
- e. after October 1, 1999, an Institutional Nominee, which shall mean a student nominated by an institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education:
 - (1) whose American College Testing Program or Scholastic Aptitude Test score falls within the 95.0 to 99.49 percentile levels, or
 - (2) who shows exceptional academic achievement as evidenced by factors, including, but not limited to, grade point average, class rank, national awards, scholastic achievements, honors, and who shows exceptional promise based on documentation that may include, but not be limited to, teacher recommendations, extracurricular activities, and evidence of overcoming economic and social obstacles as determined by the State Regents. The State Regents shall ensure that standards of high academic ability are documented. Scholarship awards to Institutional Nominees shall become effective when appropriate documentation is verified by the State Regents.

B. No person shall be eligible to receive a scholarship pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program unless the person is enrolled as a full-time student at a public or private accredited institution of higher education in Oklahoma.

C. ~~The For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraphs a through d of paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject to the availability of funds, the Oklahoma State Regents' Academic~~

Rising Scholars Award Program shall provide a scholarship in an amount not to exceed the ~~average~~ costs of all enrollment fees, tuition and other fees, room and board, and all required textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of undergraduate and/or graduate study at an accredited public or private institution of higher education in Oklahoma ~~as provided in subsection E of this section.~~ The State Regents may establish separate scholarship award levels for each qualifying category.

1. If the student is attending an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this subsection at the institution attended as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this subsection at an institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its type of institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

D. For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraph e of paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject to the availability of funds, the Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program shall provide a scholarship in an amount not to exceed the average costs of all enrollment fees and other fees, room and board, and all required textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of undergraduate and/or graduate study at an accredited public or private institution of higher education in Oklahoma. The State Regents may establish separate scholarship award levels for each qualifying category.

1. If the student is attending an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the institution shall provide a tuition waiver not to exceed the average cost of tuition. The total funding for the scholarship and waiver provided for students attending an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as provided in this subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this subsection at the institution attended as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher education in Oklahoma, the scholarship shall include an amount not to exceed the average cost of tuition. The total funding for scholarships for students attending a private institution as provided in this subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this subsection at an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its type of institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

E. If a person identifies himself or herself as a student with a disability and requests consideration for a scholarship under the Academic Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program by means other than standard testing procedures, the State Regents shall determine what means of assessment are appropriate and upon the basis of said assessment results, determine what level of award, if any, shall be made.

E. 1. If the student is attending an institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this section, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in subsection C of this section at the institution attended as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this section, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in subsection C of this section at an institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its type institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2404, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2404. A. Scholarships awarded under the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall be awarded to all eligible applicants without any limitation on the number of scholarships to be awarded in any year other than the amount of

funds available for the scholarship program and the number of eligible applicants.

B. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may, at the time a scholarship is awarded to a student, set aside in the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Trust Fund funds for the full five-year commitment made to such eligible scholar. For all academic years, students who have previously received academic scholarships under the provisions of this act and who have continued at all times to fulfill the requirements for eligibility to receive academic scholarships provided in this act shall be given an absolute priority for continued financial support by the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program superior to any students who are applying for such academic scholarships awards for the first time.

C. In addition to the qualifications specified in Section 2403 of this title, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may adopt additional criteria for selection and allocation of awards which may include, but are not limited to, consideration of high school academic performance and personal interviews. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall annually report on the number of former Academic Rising Scholars Award Program participants who stay in state as compared to those who leave Oklahoma within five (5) years of leaving the Award Program. In addition, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby authorized to determine a maximum number of awards or a maximum amount of funding which may go to nonresident students. Such maximum limitations shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the awards or amount of funding in any category provided in paragraph 2 of subsection A of Section 2403 of this title.

SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2405, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2405. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may adopt rules and regulations, prescribe and provide appropriate forms for application, and employ such persons, contract for such services and make such additional expenditures as may be necessary or appropriate for implementing the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Act; provided, as part of the regulations adopted for administration of the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall require that each scholarship recipient make continuing and satisfactory progress

toward a degree, including the establishment of an annual minimum grade point average and annual minimum credit hours to be maintained by the participants. Such regulations shall also provide for revoking or rescinding assistance to any scholarship recipient who fails to meet such required standards. Such regulations shall also provide that the funds made available to students as part of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall be paid directly to the institution of the student's choice, in trust for the student, and on the student's behalf, and shall contain appropriate restrictions and conditions that such monies are expended only for the purposes authorized by this act. Such regulations shall also provide for portability of award for a recipient among accredited institutions of higher education in Oklahoma in which the recipient may enroll as long as the recipient meets requirements of the program; however, waivers shall only be portable between institutions in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education and waiver portability may be further limited by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education rules and regulations.

SECTION 6. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2406, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2406. The Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Act shall not be construed as granting any authority to control or influence the policies of any educational institution because it accepts students who are participating in the scholarship program, or to require any such institution to admit, or once admitted to continue in such institution, any participant in the scholarship program.

SECTION 7. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2407, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2407. As part of its duties in administering the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, shall encourage Oklahoma high school juniors who plan to attend college to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in their junior year in high school as preparation for taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test their senior year in high school.

SECTION 8. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

SECTION 9. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the House of Representatives the 28th day of May, 2025.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

Passed the Senate the 28th day of May, 2025.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this _____
day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____. M.
By: _____

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this _____
day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____. M.

Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this _____
day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____. M.
By: _____