

SENATE FLOOR VERSION
April 16, 2025
AS AMENDED

ENGROSSED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1282

By: Caldwell (Chad) of the House

and

Rader of the Senate

[scholarships - eligibility - program - awards - amounts - waivers - award - name - rules - names - effective date -]

emergency]

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
ll be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma ~~State Regents'~~
demie 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

1 graduate study at an accredited public or private institution of
2 higher education in Oklahoma ~~as provided in subsection E of this~~
3 ~~section.~~ The State Regents may establish separate scholarship award
4 levels for each qualifying category.

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

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

19 D. For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraph e of
20 paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject to the
21 availability of funds, the Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program
22 shall provide a scholarship in an amount not to exceed the average
23 costs of all enrollment fees and other fees, room and board, and all
24 required textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of

1 undergraduate and/or graduate study at an accredited public or
2 private institution of higher education in Oklahoma. The State
3 Regents may establish separate scholarship award levels for each
4 qualifying category.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Section 2404. A. Scholarships awarded under the Oklahoma ~~State~~
2 ~~Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program shall be awarded to
3 all eligible applicants without any limitation on the number of
4 scholarships to be awarded in any year other than the amount of
5 funds available for the scholarship program and the number of
6 eligible applicants.

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

19 C. In addition to the qualifications specified in Section 2403
20 of this title, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may
21 adopt additional criteria for selection and allocation of awards
22 which may include, but are not limited to, consideration of high
23 school academic performance and personal interviews. The Oklahoma
24 State Regents for Higher Education shall annually report on the

1 number of former Academic Rising Scholars Award Program participants
2 who stay in state as compared to those who leave Oklahoma within
3 five (5) years of leaving the Award Program. In addition, the
4 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby authorized to
5 determine a maximum number of awards or a maximum amount of funding
6 which may go to nonresident students. Such maximum limitations
7 shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the awards or amount
8 of funding in any category provided in paragraph 2 of subsection A
9 of Section 2403 of this title.

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

12 Section 2405. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
13 may adopt rules and regulations, prescribe and provide appropriate
14 forms for application, and employ such persons, contract for such
15 services and make such additional expenditures as may be necessary
16 or appropriate for implementing the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State~~
17 ~~Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Act; provided, as part of
18 the regulations adopted for administration of the provisions of the
19 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program, the
20 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall require that each
21 scholarship recipient make continuing and satisfactory progress
22 toward a degree, including the establishment of an annual minimum
23 grade point average and annual minimum credit hours to be maintained
24 by the participants. Such regulations shall also provide for

1 revoking or rescinding assistance to any scholarship recipient who
2 fails to meet such required standards. Such regulations shall also
3 provide that the funds made available to students as part of the
4 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall
5 be paid directly to the institution of the student's choice, in
6 trust for the student, and on the student's behalf, and shall
7 contain appropriate restrictions and conditions that such monies are
8 expended only for the purposes authorized by this act. Such
9 regulations shall also provide for portability of award for a
10 recipient among accredited institutions of higher education in
11 Oklahoma in which the recipient may enroll as long as the recipient
12 meets requirements of the program; however, waivers shall only be
13 portable between institutions in The Oklahoma State System of Higher
14 Education and waiver portability may be further limited by the
15 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education rules and regulations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
April 16, 2025 - DO PASS

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