

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
93rd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2021

A Bill

SENATE BILL 457

By: Senator B. Davis
By: Representatives J. Mayberry, Ennett

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - PART 2; TO EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - PART 2 TO INCLUDE A STUDENT WHO IS ACCEPTED INTO AN APPROVED COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION AND POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - PART 2 TO INCLUDE A STUDENT WHO IS ACCEPTED INTO AN APPROVED COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION AND POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-85-204, concerning definitions under the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program – Part 2, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(28) "Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program" means a program approved by the United States Department of Education as defined in 34 CFR § 668.230 et seq.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-85-206(3)(A), concerning admission as a full-time or part-time student to be eligible for the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, is amended to read as follows:



(3)(A) The applicant is accepted for admission as a full-time student or part-time student ~~at~~:

(i) ~~At an~~ At an approved institution of higher education in a program of study that leads to or is creditable toward:

(a) A baccalaureate degree;

(b) An associate degree;

(c) A certificate from a qualified certificate program; or

(d) A graduate-level or professional degree;

~~or~~

(ii) ~~At an~~ At an approved school of nursing in a program of study that leads to a nursing diploma under § 6-85-213; or

(iii) In a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-85-210(a)(1), concerning continuing eligibility criteria for an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A) A recipient who meets continuing eligibility criteria under this subchapter shall receive a scholarship for one (1) academic year renewable annually until the recipient has earned one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours or has received a scholarship under this subchapter for eight (8) semesters, whichever occurs first.

(B)(i) A recipient may continue to receive a scholarship after he or she has earned one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours, ~~but not more than one hundred thirty (130) semester credit hours,~~ if the student is enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program that requires more than one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours as provided under § 6-61-232.

(ii) The Division of Higher Education, in conjunction with the approved institution of higher education at which the recipient is enrolled, shall determine the maximum period for renewal of a scholarship under this subchapter.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 85, Subchapter 2, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-85-222. Additional eligibility requirements for Comprehensive

Transition and Postsecondary Program student.

(a) In addition to the requirements of § 6-85-206, an applicant is eligible for an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship as a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program student if the applicant has:

(1) Completed high school in an Arkansas high school in accordance with the requirements of the applicant's individualized education program under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. or accommodations made for the applicant under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794; and

(2) Been accepted for admission to and enrolled in an approved institution of higher education eligible program of study within thirty-six (36) months of completing high school.

(b) To maintain eligibility for an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship under this section, a recipient shall:

(1) Maintain continual enrollment in the approved institution of higher education eligible program of study in which the recipient is enrolled; and

(2) Make satisfactory academic progress in the approved institution of higher education eligible program of study in which the recipient is enrolled.

(c)(1) A scholarship under this section shall be renewed until the recipient:

(A) Earns a bachelor's degree; or

(B) Attempts a total of one hundred thirty (130) semester hours within eight (8) semesters.

(2) If the recipient's eligible program of study under this section requires more than one hundred thirty (130) semester credit hours to complete, the Division of Higher Education, in conjunction with the approved institution of higher education program at which the recipient is enrolled, shall determine the maximum period for renewal of a scholarship under subdivision (c)(1) of this section.

(d) A recipient of a scholarship under this section who loses eligibility for the scholarship is not eligible to reapply to receive the scholarship.

(e)(1) The division may approve a scholarship hold for a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program student for the following reasons:

(A) A medical condition of the student or a member of the student's immediate family that, on the basis of a physician's good-faith judgment, necessitates the student or the student's immediate family member to be hospitalized or receive outpatient or home-based medical care or to recuperate until released by the attending physician; or

(B) A personal or family emergency that requires the student to:

(i) Attend the funeral of an immediate family member; or

(ii) Visit a relative of the student if the relative has a medical condition in which death is possible or imminent.

(2) A student who is approved for a scholarship hold under subdivision (e)(1) of this section shall maintain eligibility requirements under this section and § 6-85-206 in order to be eligible for a scholarship hold.

(f) A scholarship granted to a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program student under this section shall be applied to only one (1) approved institution of higher education at a time.

(g) As used in this section:

(1) "Approved institution of higher education program" means only the following programs within institutions of higher education:

(A) Arkansas State University – H.O.W.L. Transition Program;

(B) South Arkansas Community College – Academic and Career Achievement Program;

(C) University of Arkansas – EMPOWER Program; and

(D) University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College – 3D Program;

(2) "Eligible program of study" means a postsecondary program that:

(A) Has received the Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program designation from the United States Department of Education;

(B) Is offered by an approved institution of higher education that assists students with disabilities who have completed high school and who need a system of education and support services to access and

obtain postsecondary education; and

(C) Includes an individualized program of study for up to four (4) years that is designed to provide postsecondary activities on campus, including without limitation:

(i) Academic activities;

(ii) Career development;

(iii) Career exploration; and

(iv) Independent living skills; and

(3) "Student with a disability" means an individual:

(A) Has a cognitive impairment characterized by significant limitations in:

(i) Intellectual and cognitive functioning; or

(ii) Adaptive behavior as expressed in the following skills:

(a) Conceptual skills;

(b) Social skills; or

(c) Practical adaptive skills;

(B) Is currently, or was formerly, eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C., § 1400 et seq., including a student who was determined to be eligible for special education or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C., § 1400 et seq., but was home-schooled or attended private school; and

(C) Maintains an acceptable standing within the Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program that is evaluated by standards set forth in 34 CFR § 668.230 et seq. and the approved institution of higher education program in which the student is enrolled.