

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2388 Session of
2012

INTRODUCED BY PAYTON, CALTAGIRONE, FABRIZIO, THOMAS AND
YOUNGBLOOD, MAY 16, 2012

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 16, 2012

AN ACT

1 Establishing a Statewide academic scholarship program to be
2 known as the Reliable Educational Assistance for College
3 Hopefuls Scholarship for Education; and providing for the
4 powers and duties of the Pennsylvania Higher Education
5 Assistance Agency.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Reliable
10 Educational Assistance for College Hopefuls Scholarship for
11 Education Act.

12 Section 2. Purpose.

13 The purpose of this act is to reward educational excellence
14 and provide an incentive to Pennsylvania students to pursue a
15 career in teaching within this Commonwealth.

16 Section 3. Definitions.

17 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
18 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
19 context clearly indicates otherwise:

1 "Accredited teacher preparation program." A sequence of
2 courses and experiences to prepare professional personnel for
3 employment in the public schools that is offered at a college or
4 university within this Commonwealth and is approved by the
5 Pennsylvania Department of Education.

6 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
7 Agency.

8 "Fund." The REACH Scholarship Fund for Education established
9 in section 6.

10 "Grade point average." The numbered grade average calculated
11 using a 4.0 scale.

12 "Private institution of higher education." An institution of
13 higher education located in this Commonwealth that provides an
14 organized four-year program of undergraduate instruction toward
15 a baccalaureate degree and that is not a State-owned institution
16 or State-related institution.

17 "REACH Scholarship for Education." The Reliable Educational
18 Assistance for College Hopefuls Scholarship for Education
19 established under section 4.

20 "State-owned institution." An institution that is part of
21 the State System of Higher Education pursuant to Article XX-A of
22 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public
23 School Code of 1949.

24 "State-related institution." Any of the following: The
25 Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh,
26 Temple University and Lincoln University and their branch
27 campuses.

28 "Student." A school-age resident of this Commonwealth who
29 attends or is about to attend a State-owned institution, State-
30 related institution or private institution of higher education

located in this Commonwealth, and who is enrolled, or plans to enroll, in an accredited teacher preparation program.

Section 4. REACH Scholarship for Education.

(a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship for Education is established within the agency.

(b) Issuance of scholarships.--

(1) The agency shall provide scholarships, which may be referred to as REACH Scholarships for Education, to all students who meet the requirements of subsection (d) or (f). The scholarships may be issued to a student only upon confirmation from the State-owned institution, State-related institution or private institution of higher education to which the student has enrolled full time.

(2) The scholarships shall be available for four years or upon completion of a baccalaureate degree, whichever occurs earlier.

(3) The scholarships shall only be used for tuition and mandatory fees.

(4) The scholarships shall be awarded solely on the basis of merit and without regard to need.

(5) The scholarships shall only be awarded to students who are high school seniors during or after the school year in which this section takes effect.

(c) Calculation of award.--

(1) Each eligible student who will attend or attends a State-owned institution and enrolls in an accredited teacher preparation program shall receive a full-tuition scholarship.

(2) Each eligible student who will attend or attends a State-related institution or private institution of higher education and enrolls in an accredited teacher preparation

1 program shall receive the lesser of a full-tuition
2 scholarship or a scholarship equal to the average tuition at
3 the State-owned institutions as calculated annually by the
4 agency.

5 (d) Eligibility.--To receive a scholarship under this
6 section, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

7 (1) Pennsylvania residency for at least three years
8 prior to application for the REACH Scholarship for Education.

9 (2) Pennsylvania residency during the term of the
10 scholarship.

11 (3) Cumulative high school grade point average of 3.0 or
12 higher for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high
13 school. If the student does not graduate from high school or
14 completes a home study program meeting the requirements of
15 section 1327.1 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14),
16 known as the Public School Code of 1949, the agency shall
17 determine the eligibility of the student.

18 (4) Graduation in the top ten percentile of the
19 graduating class. If the student does not graduate from high
20 school or completes a home study program meeting the
21 requirements of section 1327.1 of the Public School Code of
22 1949, the agency shall determine the eligibility of the
23 student.

24 (5) Cumulative high school attendance of at least 90%
25 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school
26 unless the agency determines there are extenuating
27 circumstances, including, but not limited to, approved
28 medical or personal leave of absence. If the student does not
29 graduate from high school but completes a home study program
30 meeting the requirements of section 1327.1 of the Public

1 School Code of 1949, the agency shall determine the
2 eligibility of the student.

3 (6) Satisfactory disciplinary record or conduct record
4 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school. If
5 the student does not meet this requirement but meets or
6 exceeds all other requirements under this subsection, the
7 agency shall determine eligibility of the student.

8 (7) Satisfactory academic progress toward completion of
9 a course of study in an accredited teacher preparation
10 program at a State-owned institution, State-related
11 institution or private institution of higher education as
12 provided under subsection (f).

13 (8) Entrance into a written agreement with the agency to
14 maintain Pennsylvania residency for four years after
15 completion of an undergraduate degree. The student shall
16 reimburse the Commonwealth all amounts received under this
17 act and interest thereon, at a rate equal to the average
18 Stafford loan through the term of the scholarship, if the
19 student fails to comply with the terms of the written
20 agreement.

21 (9) Apply for the Free Application for Federal Student
22 Aid each year during the term of the scholarship.

23 (10) Complete at least 100 hours of community service
24 each academic year of high school. The community service must
25 be documented by a supervisor and approved by the agency.

26 (e) Contents of application.--The application of a student
27 who seeks a scholarship as prescribed by the agency must
28 include:

29 (1) All information and documentation required by the
30 agency.

1 (2) If the student is under 18 years of age, the
2 signature of a parent or guardian.

3 (3) A verified statement of grade point average,
4 attendance and disciplinary record or conduct record from the
5 appropriate educational institution.

6 (f) Maintenance of scholarship.--

7 (1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), a student
8 must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher during
9 each semester at a State-owned institution, State-related
10 institution or private institution of higher education
11 through the term of the scholarship, unless the agency
12 determines that there are extenuating circumstances,
13 including, but not limited to, approved medical or personal
14 leave of absence.

15 (2) In the event that a student receives a grade point
16 average below 3.0 during the first or second semester of the
17 freshmen or first year at a State-owned institution, State-
18 related institution or private institution of higher
19 education, the agency shall place the student on scholarship
20 probation.

21 (3) A student must complete 40 hours of community
22 service during each 12-month period during the term of the
23 scholarship, which community service must be verified by the
24 agency.

25 (g) Scholarship termination and transfer.--

26 (1) If a student who has received a scholarship
27 terminates enrollment in the educational institution to which
28 the student has enrolled full time during the academic year,
29 or enrolls in a program of study that is not related to
30 teacher preparation, the educational institution shall notify

1 the agency in writing and shall return all unused portions of
2 the scholarship.

3 (2) Returned amounts shall be deposited in the REACH
4 Scholarship Fund for Education.

5 (3) A student may transfer a scholarship from one State-
6 owned institution, State-related institution or private
7 institution of higher education to another, provided that the
8 student continues study in an accredited teacher preparation
9 program.

10 (h) Limitation.--A scholarship shall be paid only from the
11 REACH Scholarship Fund for Education.

12 Section 5. Administration.

13 (a) Verification.--The agency shall monitor and verify a
14 student's compliance with all the requirements under this act.

15 (b) Enforcement.--The agency shall enforce repayment of all
16 scholarships for a student who does not comply with the
17 provisions of this act, to include use of all lawful collection
18 procedures and the use of private collection agencies.

19 (c) Exclusion from taxation.--No scholarship received by a
20 student shall be considered taxable income for purposes of
21 Article III of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as
22 the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

23 (d) Financial assistance.--No scholarship received by a
24 student shall be considered financial assistance or
25 appropriations to the approved education institution.

26 (e) Regulations.--The agency shall adopt regulations and
27 procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.

28 Section 6. REACH Scholarship Fund for Education.

29 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship Fund for Education
30 is established as a separate fund in the State Treasury.

1 (b) Administration.--The fund shall be administered by the
2 agency.

3 (c) Use of fund.--The purpose of the fund shall be to
4 provide full tuition scholarships or equivalent scholarships to
5 students who have been determined eligible in accordance with
6 this act.

7 (d) Funding source.--

8 (1) Donations and contributions from all public and
9 private sources, including the Federal Government, and any
10 appropriations or transfers authorized by the General
11 Assembly may be deposited in the fund.

12 (2) All interest earned by the fund and all refunds and
13 repayments shall be credited to the fund.

14 (e) Limit on scholarships.--The agency shall not award more
15 than \$25,000,000 in scholarships under this act.

16 Section 7. Report to General Assembly.

17 On or before April 1 following the effective date of this
18 section, and in each succeeding year in which REACH Scholarships
19 for Education are awarded, the agency shall provide a report to
20 the General Assembly regarding the implementation and
21 administration of this act.

22 Section 8. Effective date.

23 This act shall take effect July 1, 2011, or immediately,
24 whichever is later.