

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 467 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY BOYLE, PAYTON, R. TAYLOR, EACHUS, K. SMITH,
WAGNER, YOUNGBLOOD, YUDICHAK, LEVDANSKY, BRENNAN, BROWN,
D. COSTA, DePASQUALE, DONATUCCI, DRUCKER, FABRIZIO, FREEMAN,
GEIST, GEORGE, GOODMAN, HENNESSEY, HORNAMAN, JOHNSON,
JOSEPHS, W. KELLER, KIRKLAND, KORTZ, MAHONEY, McGEEHAN,
MELIO, D. O'BRIEN, PARKER, M. O'BRIEN, READSHAW, REICHLEY,
SABATINA, SANTONI, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, WALKO, WANSACZ,
GIBBONS, STURLA, GRUCELA, MENSCH AND LONGIETTI,
FEBRUARY 18, 2009

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, MARCH 24, 2010

AN ACT

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

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

7 Section 1. Short title.

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

10 Section 2. Purpose.

11 The purpose of this act is to reward educational excellence
12 and provide an incentive to Pennsylvania students to pursue
13 higher education within this Commonwealth.

14 Section 3. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall

1 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
4 Agency.

5 "Fund." The REACH Scholarship Fund established in section 6.

6 "Grade point average." The numbered grade average calculated
7 using a 4.0 scale.

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

13 "REACH." The Reliable Educational Assistance for College
14 Hopefuls Scholarship established under section 4.

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

19 "State-related institution." Any of the following: The
20 Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh,
21 Temple University and Lincoln University and their branch
22 campuses.

23 "Student." A school-age resident of this Commonwealth who
24 attends or is about to attend a State-owned institution, State-
25 related institution or private institution of higher education
26 located in this Commonwealth.

27 Section 4. REACH Scholarship.

28 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship is established
29 within the agency.

30 (b) Issuance of scholarships.--

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

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

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

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

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

18 (c) Calculation of award.--

19 (1) Each eligible student who will attend or attends a
20 State-owned institution shall receive a full-tuition
21 scholarship.

22 (2) Each eligible student who will attend or attends a
23 State-related institution or private institution of higher
24 education shall receive the lesser of a full-tuition
25 scholarship or a scholarship equal to the average tuition at
26 the State-owned institutions as calculated annually by the
27 agency.

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

30 (1) Pennsylvania residency for at least three years

1 prior to application for the REACH Scholarship.

2 (2) Pennsylvania residency during the term of the
3 scholarship.

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

11 (4) Cumulative high school attendance of at least 90%
12 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school
13 unless the agency determines there are extenuating
14 circumstances, including, but not limited to, approved
15 medical or personal leave of absence. If the student does not
16 graduate from high school but completes a home study program
17 meeting the requirements of section 1327.1 of the Public
18 School Code of 1949, the agency shall determine the
19 eligibility of the student.

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

25 (6) Satisfactory academic progress toward completion of
26 a course of study at a State-owned institution, State-related
27 institution or private institution of higher education as
28 provided under subsection (f).

29 (7) Entrance into a written agreement with the agency to
30 maintain Pennsylvania residency for four years after

1 completion of ~~an undergraduate~~ A BACCALAUREATE degree. The
2 student shall reimburse the Commonwealth all amounts received
3 under this act and interest thereon, at a rate equal to the
4 average Stafford loan through the term of the scholarship, if
5 the student fails to comply with the terms of the written
6 agreement.

7 (8) Apply for the Free Application for Federal Student
8 Aid each year during the term of the scholarship.

9 (9) Complete at least 100 hours of community service
10 each academic year. The community service must be documented
11 by a supervisor and approved by the agency.

12 (e) Contents of application.--The application of a student
13 who seeks a scholarship as prescribed by the agency must
14 include:

15 (1) All information and documentation required by the
16 agency.

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

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

22 (f) Maintenance of scholarship.--

23 (1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), a student
24 must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher during
25 each semester at a State-owned institution, State-related
26 institution or private institution of higher education
27 through the term of the scholarship, unless the agency
28 determines that there are extenuating circumstances,
29 including, but not limited to, approved medical or personal
30 leave of absence.

1 (2) In the event that a student receives a grade point
2 average below 3.0 during ~~the first or second semester of the~~ ←
3 ~~freshmen or first year~~ A SEMESTER at a State-owned ←
4 institution, State-related institution or private institution
5 of higher education, the agency shall place the student on
6 scholarship probation. IF A STUDENT ON SCHOLARSHIP PROBATION ←
7 RECEIVES A GRADE POINT AVERAGE BELOW 3.0 IN ANY FOLLOWING
8 SEMESTER, THE SCHOLARSHIP SHALL BE TERMINATED.

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

13 (g) Scholarship termination and transfer.--

14 (1) If a student who has received a scholarship
15 terminates enrollment in the educational institution to which
16 the student has enrolled full time during the academic year,
17 the educational institution shall notify the agency in
18 writing and shall return all unused portions of the
19 scholarship.

20 (2) Returned amounts shall be deposited in the REACH
21 Scholarship Fund.

22 (3) A student may transfer a scholarship from one State-
23 owned institution, State-related institution or private
24 institution of higher education to another.

25 (h) Limitation.--A scholarship shall be paid only from the
26 REACH Scholarship Fund.

27 Section 5. Administration.

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

30 (b) Enforcement.--The agency shall enforce repayment of all

1 scholarships for a student who does not comply with the
2 provisions of this act, to include use of all lawful collection
3 procedures and the use of private collection agencies.

4 (c) Exclusion from taxation.--No scholarship received by a
5 student shall not be considered taxable income for purposes of
6 Article III of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as
7 the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

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

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

13 Section 6. REACH Scholarship Fund.

14 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship Fund is
15 established as a separate fund in the State Treasury.

16 (b) Administration.--The fund shall be administered by the
17 agency.

18 (c) Use of fund.--The purpose of the fund shall be to
19 provide full tuition scholarships or equivalent scholarships to
20 students who have been determined eligible in accordance with
21 this act.

22 (d) Funding source.--

23 (1) Donations and contributions from all public and
24 private sources, including the Federal Government, and any
25 appropriations or transfers authorized by the General
26 Assembly may be deposited in the fund.


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

29 Section 7. Report to General Assembly.

30 On or before April 1 following the effective date of this

1 section, and in each succeeding year in which REACH Scholarships
2 are awarded, the agency shall provide a report to the General
3 Assembly regarding the implementation and administration of this
4 act.

5 Section 8. Effective date.

6 This act shall take effect July 1, ~~2009~~ 2010, or immediately, 
7 whichever is later.