

HB0150



96TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2009 and 2010

HB0150

Introduced 1/14/2009, by Rep. David E. Miller

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the 21st Century Scholars Act to provide an incentive for low-income students in the 8th grade to improve their academic preparation for postsecondary education. Sets forth provisions concerning annual tuition scholarships to applicants who qualify; requiring the State, the participating school district, and the student to enter into a 3-part compact; rules to implement the Act; and reporting to the General Assembly on awards.

LRB096 03209 NHT 13226 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the 21st
5 Century Scholars Act.

6 Section 5. Findings and purpose.

7 (a) The General Assembly finds that one of the greatest
8 barriers to access to college and success in college is
9 adequate preparation for academic work at the college-level.
10 The General Assembly also finds that large numbers of students
11 are required to take remedial education courses before they are
12 ready for college-level courses, particularly in writing and
13 mathematics. The General Assembly further acknowledges that
14 poor academic preparation may create an often insurmountable
15 barrier to college or career success and result in limited,
16 needs-based, financial aid being used on substantial remedial
17 coursework.

18 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to provide an
19 incentive for low-income Illinois students to improve their
20 academic preparation for postsecondary education. The General
21 Assembly acknowledges that, in addition to the poor academic
22 preparation of low-income students, the lack of information and
23 support services on financial aid and college and career

1 readiness create significant barriers to college and career
2 success.

3 (c) This Act is intended to leverage this State's
4 successful, needs-based Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants to
5 low-income students with a voluntary, school district-based,
6 incentive program for improved academic preparation.

7 Section 10. Definitions.

8 "Commission" means the Illinois Student Assistance
9 Commission.

10 "Eligible student" means a student who meets all of the
11 following requirements at the time of eligibility:

12 (1) Is a resident of this State.

13 (2) Is enrolled in grade 8 at a public or an
14 accredited, nonpublic school.

15 (3) Is eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under
16 the National School Lunch Program.

17 (4) Agrees in writing, together with the student's
18 custodial parents or guardian, that the student will do the
19 following:

20 (A) graduate from an approved high school, as
21 defined in the Higher Education Student Assistance
22 Act;

23 (B) complete the 21st Century Scholars Curriculum;

24 (C) have no felony convictions;

25 (D) apply (i) to an institution of higher learning

1 for admission and (ii) for any federal and State
2 student financial assistance available to the student
3 to attend an institution of higher learning; and

4 (E) achieve a cumulative grade point average upon
5 graduation of at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale (or
6 its equivalent if another grading scale is used) for
7 courses taken during grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

8 "Institution of higher learning" means "institution of
9 higher learning" as defined in the Higher Education Student
10 Assistance Act.

11 "Program" means the 21st Century Scholars Program
12 established under this Act.

13 "Scholarship applicant" means a student who meets all of
14 the following requirements:

15 (1) Was an eligible student.

16 (2) Is a resident of this State.

17 (3) Has graduated from an approved high school, as
18 defined in the Higher Education Student Assistance Act, and
19 completed the 21st Century Scholars Curriculum.

20 (4) Has been accepted to attend an institution of
21 higher learning in this State as a full-time student.

22 (5) Has timely filed an application for other types of
23 financial assistance available to the student from the
24 State and federal government.

25 "Tuition scholarship" means financial assistance provided
26 under Section 15 of this Act to a student to offset the costs

1 of tuition and other mandatory fees incurred by the student in
2 attending an institution of higher learning. A full-tuition
3 scholarship includes the undergraduate tuition and other
4 mandatory service and activity fees, rounded to the nearest
5 whole dollar and as further defined in Section 15 of this Act.

6 "21st Century Scholars Curriculum" includes no less than 15
7 units of high school coursework from the following 5
8 categories:

9 (1) at least 4 years of English, including written and
10 oral communications and literature, of which up to 2 years
11 may be collegiate level instruction;

12 (2) at least 3 years of social studies, including
13 history and government;

14 (3) at least 3 years of mathematics (introductory
15 through advanced algebra, geometry, or trigonometry);

16 (4) at least 3 years of science (laboratory sciences);
17 and

18 (5) at least 2 years of electives in foreign language,
19 music, vocational education, or art.

20 "21st Century Scholars" means students who have been
21 awarded a tuition scholarship by the Commission to attend an
22 institution of higher learning under this Act.

23 "Participating school district" means a school district
24 that meets the requirements of Section 25 of this Act.

25 Section 15. Scholarship amount; total award.

1 (a) Subject to appropriation, the Commission shall provide
2 annual tuition scholarships to scholarship applicants who
3 qualify under Section 20 of this Act in an amount that is equal
4 to the lowest of the following amounts:

5 (1) If the scholarship applicant attends a public
6 institution of higher learning and:

7 (A) receives no other financial assistance
8 specifically designated for tuition and other
9 mandatory fees, a full-tuition scholarship to the
10 institution of higher learning shall be awarded; or

11 (B) receives other financial assistance
12 specifically designated for tuition and other
13 mandatory fees, the balance required to attend the
14 institution of higher learning shall be awarded, not to
15 exceed the amount described in clause (A) of this
16 subdivision (1).

17 (2) If the scholarship applicant attends a private
18 institution of higher learning and:

19 (A) receives no other financial assistance
20 specifically designated for tuition and other
21 mandatory fees, an average of the full-tuition
22 scholarship amounts for all public universities in
23 this State, as determined by the Commission, shall be
24 awarded; or

25 (B) receives other financial assistance
26 specifically designated for tuition and other

1 mandatory fees, the balance required to attend the
2 institution of higher learning shall be awarded, not to
3 exceed the amount described in clause (A) of this
4 subdivision (2).

5 (b) Each tuition scholarship awarded under this Act is
6 renewable under Section 20 of this Act for a total scholarship
7 award that does not exceed the equivalent of 135 credit hours.

8 Section 20. Application and renewal of tuition
9 scholarship.

10 (a) To initially qualify for a tuition scholarship under
11 this Act, a scholarship applicant must do all of the following:

12 (1) Demonstrate acceptance as a full-time student by an
13 institution of higher learning.

14 (2) Submit to the Commission all of the information and
15 evidence required by the Commission to determine
16 eligibility as a scholarship applicant.

17 (3) Agree to release student record information, such
18 as grades and his or her chosen field of study, to the
19 Commission for the purpose of assessing the educational
20 persistence of 21st Century Scholars.

21 (b) To qualify for tuition scholarship renewal under this
22 Act, a scholarship recipient must do all of the following:

23 (1) Submit to the Commission a renewal application and
24 evidence required by the Commission.

25 (2) Continue to comply with the requirements set forth

1 in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this Section.

2 (3) Continue to be a student in good standing at the
3 institution of higher learning.

4 Section 25. Responsibilities and obligations. The State,
5 the participating school district, and the student shall enter
6 into a 3-part compact as follows:

7 (1) At a minimum, the school district shall agree to
8 provide a 21st Century Scholars Curriculum to eligible
9 students and offer all of the following:

10 (A) Academic support for satisfactory completion
11 of courses.

12 (B) Guidance to eligible students enrolled in
13 rigorous courses that will prepare them for
14 college-level classes and ameliorate the need for
15 remedial coursework at institutions of higher
16 learning.

17 (C) Assistance in applying for applicable State
18 and federal financial aid opportunities.

19 (D) Information about the full range of higher
20 education options.

21 (E) Assistance with applying and enrolling at an
22 institution of higher learning.

23 (F) Individualized support as necessary to
24 facilitate the purpose of this Act.

25 (G) Opportunities for parents or legal guardians

1 to participate in activities designed to support the
2 academic preparation and collegiate aspirations of
3 their children.

4 The participating school district shall report
5 annually to the Commission on the number of eligible
6 students enrolled in the Program.

7 (2) The eligible student agrees to do all of the
8 following:

9 (A) Enroll in a 21st Century Scholars Curriculum
10 consisting of the courses delineated in Section 10 of
11 this Act.

12 (B) Maintain at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale
13 (or its equivalent).

14 (C) Participate in academic support services, such
15 as mentoring and tutoring, as developed by the school
16 district.

17 (D) Participate in activities designed to assist
18 in the college search, application, and financial aid
19 processes.

20 (E) Apply to at least one institution of higher
21 learning.

22 (3) The Commission agrees to certify school districts
23 that provide the 21st Century Curriculum and meet the
24 requirements of subdivision (1) of this Section. Subject to
25 State appropriations, the Commission shall also provide a
26 tuition scholarship to 21st Century Scholars.

1 Section 90. Rules. The Commission shall adopt rules to
2 implement this Act, including all of the following:

3 (1) Rules establishing additional criteria for the
4 tuition scholarships and an appeals process for students
5 denied tuition scholarships.

6 (2) Notwithstanding the definition of "eligible
7 students" under Section 5 of this Act, rules that may
8 include students who are in grades other than grade 8 as
9 eligible students.

10 (3) Rules regarding mentoring, outreach, and student
11 services programs and partnerships with school districts
12 and institutions of higher learning.

13 Section 95. Reports on awards. The Commission shall
14 prepare a statistical report on a fiscal year basis that
15 describes awards to 21st Century Scholars attending
16 institutions of higher learning and assessing the educational
17 persistence of 21st Century Scholars under this Act. The report
18 shall be filed with the General Assembly on or before August 15
19 of the year following the fiscal year covered in the report.