STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 50th Legislature (2006)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL 1993 By: Morgan

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S. 2001, Section 2605, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 134, O.S.L. 2003 (70 O.S. Supp. 2005, Section 2605), which relates to the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program; increasing family income eligibility level; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 2605, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 134, O.S.L. 2003 (70 O.S. Supp. 2005, Section 2605), is amended to read as follows:

Section 2605. A. Each school year, every fifth- through ninth-grade student in the public schools of this state shall be apprised, together with the student's parent, custodial parent, or guardian, of the student's opportunity for access to higher learning under the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the State Board of Education shall develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness program to be utilized in making students and parents aware of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program.

B. On a form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, every public school district shall designate at least one Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program contact person, who shall be a counselor or teacher, at each public school site in this state in which eighth-, ninth- or tenth-grade classes are taught. When requested by the State Regents, the State Board of Education shall

assist the State Regents to ensure the designation of contact persons.

C. Students who qualify on the basis of financial need according to the standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall be given the opportunity throughout the eighth-, ninth-, and tenth-grade years to enter into participation in the program by agreeing to, throughout the remainder of their school years:

1. Attend school regularly and do homework regularly;

2. Refrain from substance abuse;

3. Refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts;

4. Have school work and school records reviewed by mentors designated pursuant to the program;

5. Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of Education; and

6. Participate in program activities.

The contact person at the school shall maintain the agreements, which shall be executed on forms provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and managed according to regulations promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and the contact person shall monitor the student's compliance with the terms of the agreement. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are authorized to process student agreements and verify compliance with the agreements. Students failing to comply with the terms of the agreement shall not be eligible for the awards provided in Section 2604 of this title.

D. A student shall not be found to be in financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program if the income from taxable and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) exceeds Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) per year. <u>Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, a student entering the program shall not be found to be in financial need for purposes of</u>

the program if the income from taxable and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) exceeds Seventy Five Thousand Dollars ($75,000.00) per year. The student's financial qualification shall be certified by the contact person at the school or by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education on the agreement form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education; the form shall be retained in the student's permanent record and a copy forwarded to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

E. Agreements shall be witnessed by the student's parent, custodial parent, or guardian, who shall further agree to:

1. Assist the student in achieving compliance with the agreements;

2. Confer, when requested to do so, with the school contact person, other school personnel, and program mentors;

3. Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of Education; and

4. Assist the student in completing forms and reports required for program participation, making applications to institutions and schools of higher learning, and filing applications for student grants and scholarships.

F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall promulgate rules for the determination of student compliance with agreements made pursuant to this section.

G. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall designate personnel to coordinate tracking of program records for the years when students participating in the program are still in the public schools, provide staff development for contact persons in the public schools, and provide liaison with the State Board of Education and local organizations and individuals participating in the program.

H. The school district where an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program student is enrolled when the student begins participation in

the program and any subsequent school district where the student enrolls shall forward information regarding the student's participation in the program to a school to which the student transfers upon the school's request for the student's records.

I. Students participating in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall provide their social security number or their student identification number used by their school to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Regents shall keep the numbers confidential and use them only for administrative purposes.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2006.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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