

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
HOUSE BILL NO. 2399

By: Russ

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

An Act relating to the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section 2605, as last amended by Section 4, Chapter 289, O.S.L. 2017 (70 O.S. Supp. 2020, Section 2605), which relates to program awareness; modifying eligibility for certain students to participate in program; and providing an effective date.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 2605, as last amended by Section 4, Chapter 289, O.S.L. 2017 (70 O.S. Supp. 2020, Section 2605), is amended to read as follows:

Section 2605. A. Each school year, every fifth- through ninth-grade student in the public and private schools of this state and students who are educated by other means and are in the equivalent of the fifth through ninth grade shall be apprised, together with the parent, custodial parent, or guardian of the student, of the opportunity for access to higher learning under the Oklahoma Higher

1 Learning Access Program. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
2 Education and the State Board of Education shall develop, promote,  
3 and coordinate a public awareness program to be utilized in making  
4 students and parents aware of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
5 Program.

6 B. On a form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
7 Education, every public school district shall designate at least one  
8 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program contact person, who shall be  
9 a counselor or teacher, at each public school site in this state in  
10 which eighth-, ninth- or tenth-grade classes are taught. When  
11 requested by the State Regents, the State Board of Education shall  
12 assist the State Regents to ensure the designation of contact  
13 persons. Private schools shall also designate at least one school  
14 official as a contact person. For students who are educated by  
15 other means, a parent or guardian or other person approved by the  
16 State Regents shall be designated the contact person.

17 C. 1. Students who qualify on the basis of financial need  
18 according to subsection D or E of this section or who meet the  
19 eligibility qualification set forth in subparagraph a of paragraph 1  
20 of subsection B of Section 2603 of this title prior to entering the  
21 tenth grade or prior to reaching the age of fifteen (15) and the  
22 standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents  
23 for Higher Education shall be given the opportunity throughout the  
24 eighth-, ninth-, and tenth-grade years, for students enrolled in a

1 public or private school, or between the ages of thirteen (13) and  
2 fifteen (15), for students who are educated by other means, or  
3 throughout the eleventh- or twelfth-grade years, or between the ages  
4 of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18), for students who meet the  
5 conditions of paragraph 4 of subsection D of this section, to enter  
6 into participation in the program by agreeing to, throughout the  
7 remainder of their school years or educational program:

- 8 a. attend school or an educational program regularly and  
9 do homework regularly,
- 10 b. refrain from substance abuse,
- 11 c. refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts,
- 12 d. have school work and school records reviewed by  
13 mentors designated pursuant to the program,
- 14 e. provide information requested by the Oklahoma State  
15 Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of  
16 Education, and
- 17 f. participate in program activities.

18 2. Students who meet the eligibility qualification set forth in  
19 subparagraph a of paragraph 1 of subsection B of Section 2603 of  
20 this title after completing the tenth grade or after reaching the  
21 age of sixteen (16) shall be given the opportunity prior to reaching  
22 the age of twenty-one (21) to enter into participation in the  
23 program and shall execute an agreement with provisions as determined  
24 by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

1        3. The contact person shall maintain the agreements, which  
2 shall be executed on forms provided by the Oklahoma State Regents  
3 for Higher Education and managed according to regulations  
4 promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and  
5 the contact person shall monitor compliance of the student with the  
6 terms of the agreement. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
7 Education are authorized to process student agreements and verify  
8 compliance with the agreements. Students failing to comply with the  
9 terms of the agreement shall not be eligible for the awards provided  
10 in Section 2604 of this title.

11        D. Except as otherwise provided for in subsection E of this  
12 section and except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B  
13 of Section 2603 of this title, a student shall not be found to be in  
14 financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
15 Program if:

16        1. At the time the student applies for participation in the  
17 program during the eighth, ninth or tenth grade for students  
18 enrolled in a public or private school, or between the ages of  
19 thirteen (13) and fifteen (15), for students who are educated by  
20 other means, the income from taxable and nontaxable sources of the  
21 student's parent(s) exceeds Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) per  
22 year;

23        2. Beginning with eighth-, ninth- or tenth-grade students who  
24 are enrolled in a public or private school or students between the

1 ages of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by other  
2 means who apply for participation in the program in the 2017-2018  
3 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
4 parent(s) exceeds Fifty-five Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00) per year;

5 3. Beginning with eighth-, ninth- or tenth-grade students who  
6 are enrolled in a public or private school or students between the  
7 ages of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by other  
8 means who apply for participation in the program ~~in the 2021-2022~~  
9 ~~school year~~, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
10 parent(s) exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year;

11 4. Beginning with eleventh- or twelfth-grade students who are  
12 enrolled in a public or private school, or students between the ages  
13 of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) who are educated by other means,  
14 who apply for participation in the program, whose parents have  
15 become deceased after the student's tenth-grade year, the federal  
16 adjusted gross income of the student or the student's adoptive  
17 parent(s), if applicable, exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars  
18 (\$100,000.00) per year;

19 5. At the time the student begins postsecondary education and  
20 prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program  
21 benefit award, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
22 parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) per  
23 year; ~~and~~

1        ~~5.~~ 6. Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year, prior to  
2 receiving any Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award  
3 for any year during which the student is enrolled in an institution  
4 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,  
5 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
6 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal  
7 student financial aid or a private institution of higher learning  
8 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
9 this title, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
10 parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) per  
11 year.

12        The determination of financial qualification as set forth in  
13 paragraphs ~~4~~ 5 and ~~5~~ 6 of this subsection shall be based on the  
14 income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if a  
15 student:

- 16            a.    is determined to be independent of the student's  
17                    parents for federal financial aid purposes,
- 18            b.    was in the permanent custody of the Department of  
19                    Human Services at the time the student enrolled in the  
20                    program, or
- 21            c.    was in the court-ordered custody of a federally  
22                    recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal  
23                    Indian Child Welfare Act, at the time the student  
24                    enrolled in the program.

1       The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any student who  
2 has received an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit  
3 award after the 2017-2018 school year; and

4       ~~6.~~ 7. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
5 review the determination of financial qualification as set forth in  
6 paragraphs 1, 2 ~~and~~, 3 and 4 of this subsection if the income from  
7 taxable and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) includes  
8 income received from nontaxable military benefits or income received  
9 from the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or  
10 disability of the student's parent(s). If the income from taxable  
11 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s), excluding income  
12 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from  
13 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or  
14 disability of the student's parent(s), does not exceed the  
15 limitations set forth by paragraphs 1, 2 ~~and~~, 3 and 4 of this  
16 subsection, the student shall be determined to have met the  
17 financial qualification set forth in paragraphs 1, 2 ~~and~~, 3 and 4 of  
18 this subsection.

19       E. 1. A student who was adopted between birth and twelve (12)  
20 years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of  
21 Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private  
22 nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian  
23 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, shall not  
24 be found to be in financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher

1 Learning Access Program if at the time the student begins  
2 postsecondary education and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
3 Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal adjusted gross  
4 income of the student's parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Fifty Thousand  
5 Dollars (\$150,000.00) per year. The provisions of this paragraph  
6 shall not apply to any student who has received an Oklahoma Higher  
7 Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the 2012-2013 school  
8 year.

9 2. A student who was adopted between thirteen (13) and  
10 seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent custody of the  
11 Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a  
12 licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally  
13 recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child  
14 Welfare Act, shall not be found to be in financial need for purposes  
15 of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program if at the time the  
16 student begins postsecondary education and prior to receiving any  
17 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal  
18 adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) exceeds Two Hundred  
19 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) per year. The provisions of this  
20 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an  
21 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the  
22 2012-2013 school year.

23 3. Except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B of  
24 Section 2603 of this title, the determination of financial



1 qualification as set forth in this subsection shall be based on the  
2 income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if the  
3 student is determined to be independent of the student's parent(s)  
4 for federal financial aid purposes. A determination of financial  
5 qualification shall not be required for the student who meets the  
6 criteria set forth in this subsection at the time the student  
7 applies for participation in the program. The provisions of this  
8 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an  
9 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the  
10 2008-2009 school year.

11 F. The financial qualification of a student as set forth in  
12 subsections D and E of this section shall be certified by the  
13 contact person or by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
14 on the agreement form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for  
15 Higher Education. The form shall be retained in the permanent  
16 record of the student and a copy forwarded to the Oklahoma State  
17 Regents for Higher Education.

18 G. Agreements shall be witnessed by the parent, custodial  
19 parent, or guardian of the student, who shall further agree to:

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

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

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

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

7        H. Students who are enrolled in a school district located in  
8 this state that serves students who reside in both this state and an  
9 adjacent state pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-  
10 117.1 of this title, are in the eleventh and twelfth grades during  
11 the 2006-2007 school year, and who were denied participation in the  
12 program shall be allowed to enter or reenter into participation in  
13 the program by entering into agreements as set forth in subsections  
14 C and D of this section by June 1, 2008.

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

18        J. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
19 designate personnel to coordinate tracking of program records for  
20 the years when students participating in the program are still in  
21 the schools or are being educated by other means, provide staff  
22 development for contact persons in the schools, and provide liaison  
23 with the State Board of Education and local organizations and  
24 individuals participating in the program.

1 K. The school district where an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
2 Program student is enrolled when the student begins participation in  
3 the program and any subsequent school district where the student  
4 enrolls shall forward information regarding participation by the  
5 student in the program to a school to which the student transfers  
6 upon the request of the school for the records of the student.

7 L. Students participating in the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
8 Access Program shall provide their Social Security number or their  
9 student identification number used by their school to the Oklahoma  
10 State Regents for Higher Education. The Regents shall keep the  
11 numbers confidential and use them only for administrative purposes.

12 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2021.

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