

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

HOUSE BILL 4020

By: McBride

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2632, which relates to the Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Act; providing additional grant award for eligible juniors and seniors subject to the availability of funds; striking reference to closed university; 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. 2021, Section 2632, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2632. A. To be eligible for an Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant, a student shall:

1. Be an Oklahoma resident as defined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education;

2. Have enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in an eligible institution of higher education as prescribed in subsection E of this section;

3. Meet the income eligibility level, which is the student's parents' income from taxable and nontaxable sources which shall not

1 be more than Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) per year or the  
2 student's income if the student is independent and self-supporting  
3 as determined by the State Regents consistent with federal financial  
4 aid regulations;

5 4. Pay more tuition than is required at a comparable public  
6 institution of higher education and pay no less than the regular  
7 tuition required of all students enrolled at the institution where  
8 the student is enrolled; and

9 5. Maintain at least minimum standards of academic performance  
10 as required by the enrolling institution.

11 B. The enrolling institution shall forward a completed student  
12 application, documentation of full-time enrollment status, and  
13 certification of resident status to the State Regents no later than  
14 October 15 for the fall semester and March 15 for the spring  
15 semester of each academic year.

16 C. Subject to the availability of funds in the Oklahoma Tuition  
17 Equalization Grant Trust Fund, an Oklahoma Tuition Equalization  
18 Grant in the amount of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) per academic  
19 year, or One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per academic semester  
20 shall be awarded by the State Regents by allocation from the  
21 Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Trust Fund, beginning with  
22 eligible students enrolled in the 2003-2004 school year. No grants  
23 pursuant to this act shall be provided to students for attending  
24 summer terms or intersessions.

1       D. In addition to the grants awarded pursuant to subsection C  
2 of this section and subject to the availability of funds in the  
3 Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Trust Fund, eligible students  
4 who are juniors or seniors shall be awarded an additional Oklahoma  
5 Tuition Equalization Grant in the amount of Two Thousand Dollars  
6 (\$2,000.00) per academic year or One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00)  
7 per academic semester by the State Regents by allocation from the  
8 Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Trust Fund. The total Oklahoma  
9 Tuition Equalization Grant amount an eligible student who is a  
10 junior or senior may be awarded shall not exceed Four Thousand  
11 Dollars (\$4,000.00) per academic year or Two Thousand Dollars  
12 (\$2,000.00) per academic semester.

13       E. The State Regents shall implement policies and procedures  
14 for the administration of this act. The State Regents shall approve  
15 as eligible institutions of higher education only those private or  
16 independent, not-for-profit colleges or universities that are  
17 domiciled within this state, meet approved program and accreditation  
18 standards as determined by the State Regents, and are fully  
19 accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central  
20 Association on Colleges and Schools or a national accrediting body  
21 recognized by the United States Department of Education. To be  
22 eligible, institutions must have been granted not-for-profit status  
23 by the Internal Revenue Service and the U. S. Department of  
24 Education prior to July 1, 2012. Additionally, eligible

1 institutions shall adhere to the complaint process policies and  
2 procedures administered by the State Regents. The State Regents  
3 shall review and take action, as authorized, on complaints  
4 concerning eligible institutions. The eligible institutions shall  
5 include Bacone College, Family of Faith College, Mid-America  
6 Christian University, Oklahoma Baptist University, Oklahoma  
7 Christian University, Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma Wesleyan  
8 University, Oral Roberts University, Southern Nazarene University,  
9 Southwestern Christian University, ~~St. Gregory's University~~, the  
10 University of Tulsa, and Randall University.

11 ~~E.~~ F. If funds are not sufficient in the Oklahoma Tuition  
12 Equalization Grant Trust Fund to provide grants for all eligible  
13 applicants, the State Regents shall award grants on the basis of  
14 need and take into consideration other grants and scholarships  
15 received by an eligible applicant when awarding grants. Students  
16 who have previously received a tuition equalization grant and who  
17 continue to meet the requirements for eligibility shall have  
18 absolute priority for continued financial support superior to any  
19 student who is applying for a grant for the first time.

20 ~~F.~~ G. Students enrolling as first-time freshmen for the 2003-  
21 2004 school year shall be the first class of students eligible to  
22 apply for Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grants. In subsequent  
23 years, all previously eligible students and the first-time enrolling  
24 freshmen students shall be entitled to apply for a grant pursuant to  
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1 this section. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, all eligible  
2 students shall be entitled to apply for a grant pursuant to this  
3 section.

4 ~~G.~~ H. A grant provided by this section shall not be allowed for  
5 courses or other postsecondary units taken in excess of the  
6 requirements for completion of a baccalaureate program or taken more  
7 than five (5) years after the student's first grant is received.  
8 The State Regents may award an Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant  
9 for courses of postsecondary units taken more than five (5) years  
10 after the student's first grant is received only in hardship  
11 circumstances. No Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant recipient may  
12 receive benefits beyond a cumulative time period of five (5) years.

13 ~~H.~~ I. On or before February 1 after the first semester in which  
14 grants are awarded pursuant to this act and every year thereafter,  
15 the State Regents shall provide a report to the Governor, President  
16 Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
17 Representatives to include, but not be limited to the number of  
18 students awarded grants, grade point average, persistence rates,  
19 degree completion rates, demographic data, and any other indicators  
20 the State Regents deem appropriate.

21 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2024.

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

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