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ASSEMBLY, No. 2565

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
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SYNOPSIS

Allows NJ STARS and NJ STARS II scholarship recipients to maintain program eligibility in the event that medical condition or recent death of parent or spouse prevents enrollment as full-time student.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the General Assembly on March 14, 2016.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/6/2018)

1 AN ACT concerning eligibility for the NJ STARS and NJ STARS II
2 Programs and amending P.L.2008, c.124, P.L.2004, c.59, and
3 P.L.2005, c.359.

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7

8 1. Section 5 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-85) is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 5. a. A scholarship under the NJ STARS Program shall cover
11 the full cost of tuition, subject to the prior application of other
12 grants and scholarships against those costs as provided under
13 paragraph (2) of subsection c. of this section, for up to 18 credit
14 hours in any semester, for an eligible student enrolled in a full-time
15 course of study at the New Jersey county college serving the
16 student's county of residence. An otherwise eligible student who
17 demonstrates to the authority, in accordance with such criteria and
18 by means of such documentation as the authority shall establish by
19 regulation, that the county college serving the student's county of
20 residence does not offer the curriculum that the student chooses to
21 study shall be eligible for such scholarship at another New Jersey
22 county college offering that curriculum. The amount of any
23 scholarship allowed hereunder to a student at a county college
24 serving a county other than the student's county of residence shall
25 be computed as though the student were a resident of the county
26 served by that college, and the college shall likewise compute the
27 amount of any additional payment, required with respect to the
28 enrollment of that student for credit hours of study during a
29 semester in which the scholarship is awarded that are not covered
30 by that scholarship, as though the student were a resident of the
31 county.

32 b. A student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the NJ
33 STARS Program for up to five semesters, including summer
34 sessions. The scholarship shall be payable for the first year of
35 enrollment in a county college to a student who:

36 (1) has graduated high school and, in the case of a student who
37 graduates in the 2013-2014 school year and thereafter, whose class
38 rank at the completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade was in the
39 top 15.0% of the student's high school class, provided that in the
40 case of students graduating from high schools that do not calculate
41 the class rank of their students, the student's ranking at the
42 completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade shall be determined by
43 the high school in consultation with the authority; and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted February 4, 2016.

²Assembly floor amendments adopted March 14, 2016.

1 (2) completed a rigorous high school course of study in
2 accordance with standards established by the Secretary of Higher
3 Education in consultation with the Commissioner of Education.

4 During a student's enrollment in a county college after the first
5 year of enrollment, the scholarship shall be payable to that student
6 if the student attains a grade point average of at least 3.0 by the start
7 of the student's second year of county college enrollment. A
8 student who attains a grade point average of less than 3.0 at the start
9 of the second semester of the student's first year of county college
10 enrollment shall participate in an enrichment program designed by
11 the county college during the second semester of the student's first
12 year of enrollment.

13 c. To be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS
14 Program a student shall:

15 (1) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the
16 authority. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1979,
17 c.361 (C.18A:62-4) or any other section of law to the contrary, a
18 dependent child of a parent or guardian who has been transferred to
19 a military installation located in this State shall be considered a
20 resident of this State for the purposes of qualifying for an NJ
21 STARS scholarship;

22 (2) have applied for all other available forms of State and
23 federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of
24 loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be
25 applied to tuition to reduce the amount of any scholarship that the
26 student shall receive under the provisions of this act;

27 (3) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection a. or
28 subsection c. of section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.2), be
29 enrolled in a full-time course of study at a New Jersey county
30 college;

31 (4) have graduated from high school in 2004 or later, and not
32 earlier than the calendar year two years prior to the first calendar
33 year in which a scholarship payment is to be made; and

34 (5) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection a. of
35 section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.2), maintain
36 continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on
37 medical leave due to the illness of the student or a member of the
38 student's immediate family or emergency leave because of a family
39 emergency, which medical or emergency leave shall have been
40 approved by the county college, or unless called to partial or full
41 mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the
42 National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the
43 United States.

44 d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary
45 reasons from a county college shall no longer be eligible for a
46 scholarship under this act. If a student participating in the program
47 is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full
48 all amounts received under the program. The county college shall

1 be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any
2 overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under
3 the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-
4 10.

5 e. A student scholarship under the NJ STARS Program may be
6 renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid
7 application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the
8 requirements pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

9 (cf: P.L.2014, c.55, s.1)

10
11 2. Section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (18A:71B-85.2) is amended to
12 read as follows:

13 3. a. A student who receives an NJ STARS scholarship shall
14 be eligible to take less than 12 credits in the final semester if the
15 county college determines that the student needs to complete less
16 than 12 credits in that semester to complete the degree program.

17 b. In the case of a student who is enrolled in an associate
18 degree program regularly requiring six semesters, the student shall
19 not receive an NJ STARS scholarship for the sixth semester but
20 shall maintain eligibility for the New Jersey Student Tuition
21 Assistance Reward Scholarship II (NJ STARS II) Program
22 established pursuant to P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 et seq.),
23 provided that the student meets the requirements for receipt of an
24 NJ STARS II scholarship.

25 c. Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, a student who
26 receives an NJ STARS scholarship or a student who is already in
27 the NJ STARS program shall be eligible to take less than 12 credits
28 in a semester if ¹: ¹ the student provides to the county college a
29 written note from a physician or other licensed health care
30 professional indicating the student's need to take a reduced number
31 of credits due to a physical or mental health condition ¹; or the
32 student provides to the county college, in such form as determined
33 by the authority, verification of the recent death of the student's
34 parent or spouse¹ . ² [A] To receive an NJ STARS payment for the
35 semester, a² student who receives a medical exemption ¹ or an
36 exemption due to the recent death of the student's parent or spouse¹
37 from the full-time course of study requirement pursuant to this
38 subsection shall ² [be eligible for additional semesters in the NJ
39 STARS program, as necessary] enroll for a minimum of six credits
40 in the semester. A student shall receive an additional semester of
41 NJ STARS eligibility for each semester the student receives an
42 exemption from the full-time course of study requirement pursuant
43 to this subsection, not to exceed five additional semesters² .

44 (cf: P.L.2008, c.124, s.3)

45
46 3. Section 4 of P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.4) is amended
47 to read as follows:

1 4. a. A scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program shall be
2 applied toward the cost of tuition or in the case of a student who
3 receives a Tuition Aid Grant toward the cost of tuition and fees,
4 subject to the prior application of other grants and scholarships
5 against such costs as provided under paragraph (2) of subsection e.
6 of this section, for an eligible student enrolled in a full-time course
7 of study at a New Jersey four-year public or independent institution
8 of higher education. A scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program
9 shall be paid to the institution in the amount of \$1,250 per semester.
10 The cost of a scholarship shall be paid 100% by the State. Any cost
11 of attendance that is not covered by the NJ STARS II scholarship or
12 other available forms of grants and scholarships shall be paid by the
13 student.

14 b. A student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the NJ
15 STARS II Program for up to four semesters, excluding summer
16 sessions, at a New Jersey four-year public or independent institution
17 of higher education.

18 c. A student shall be eligible to receive a scholarship under the
19 NJ STARS II Program for the student's third academic year of study
20 if the student: has an annual family income, both taxable and non-
21 taxable, as derived from the Free Application for Federal Student
22 Aid (FAFSA) for the academic year, of less than \$250,000; attained
23 an associate's degree from a New Jersey county college; except as
24 otherwise provided pursuant to subsection c. of section 2 and
25 subsection b. of section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.2),
26 received a scholarship under the "New Jersey Student Tuition
27 Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program Act,"
28 P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.), for each semester of study
29 in the county college, or was eligible for but did not receive a
30 scholarship under NJ STARS because the student's tuition was fully
31 covered by other State or federal need-based grants or merit
32 scholarships, or was eligible for but did not receive a scholarship
33 under NJ STARS because the student was enrolled while a high
34 school student in county college courses and received an associate's
35 degree in accordance with a joint program offered by the student's
36 school district and a county college; attains a cumulative grade
37 point average of at least 3.25 upon graduation from county college;
38 enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program at a New Jersey four-year
39 public or independent institution of higher education for the third
40 academic year of study in the academic year immediately following
41 the student's attainment of an associate's degree; and meets the
42 criteria set forth in subsection e. of this section. A grade for credits
43 earned during a summer semester shall for the purposes of this
44 subsection be included in the calculation of the cumulative grade
45 point average.

46 d. A student shall be eligible to receive a scholarship under the
47 NJ STARS II Program for the student's fourth academic year of
48 study if the student: received a scholarship under the NJ STARS II

1 Program for the student's third academic year of study pursuant to
2 subsection c. of this section; based on the student's performance
3 during the third academic year of study, attained a grade point
4 average of at least 3.25; and meets the criteria set forth in
5 subsection e. of this section. A grade for credits earned during a
6 summer semester shall for the purposes of this subsection be
7 included in the calculation of the grade point average for the
8 preceding academic year.

9 e. To be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS
10 II Program, a student shall:

11 (1) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the
12 authority. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1979,
13 c.361 (C.18A:62-4) or any other section of law to the contrary, a
14 dependent child of a parent or guardian who has been transferred to
15 a military installation located in this State shall be considered a
16 resident of this State for the purposes of qualifying for an NJ
17 STARS II scholarship;

18 (2) have applied for all other available forms of State and
19 federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of
20 loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be
21 applied to tuition, and fee charges if applicable, to reduce the
22 amount of any scholarship that the student shall receive under the
23 provisions of P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 et seq.);

24 (3) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection h. of
25 this section, be enrolled in a full-time course of study at a four-year
26 public or independent institution of higher education; and

27 (4) maintain continuous enrollment in a full-time course of
28 study, unless on medical leave due to the illness of the student or a
29 member of the student's immediate family or emergency leave
30 because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave
31 shall have been approved by the four-year public or independent
32 institution of higher education, or unless called to partial or full
33 mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the
34 National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the
35 United States.

36 f. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary
37 reasons from a four-year public or independent institution of higher
38 education shall no longer be eligible for a scholarship under this
39 act. If a student participating in the program is dismissed for
40 disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all amounts
41 received under the program. The four-year public or independent
42 institution of higher education shall be responsible for collecting the
43 repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper
44 payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance
45 with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

46 g. A student scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program may
47 be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid

1 application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the
2 requirements pursuant to this section.

3 h. Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, a student who
4 receives an NJ STARS II scholarship or a student who is already in
5 the NJ STARS II program shall be eligible to take less than 12
6 credits in a semester if ¹; ¹ the student provides to the four-year
7 public or independent institution of higher education a written note
8 from a physician or other licensed health care professional
9 indicating the student's need to take a reduced number of credits
10 due to a physical or mental health condition ¹; or the student
11 provides to the institution, in such form as determined by the
12 authority, verification of the recent death of the student's parent or
13 spouse¹ . ²[A] To receive an NJ STARS II payment for the
14 semester, a² student who receives a medical exemption ¹or an
15 exemption due to the recent death of the student's parent or spouse¹
16 from the full-time course of study requirement pursuant to this
17 subsection shall ²[be eligible for additional semesters in the NJ
18 STARS II program, as necessary] enroll for a minimum of six
19 credits in the semester. A part-time NJ STARS II award shall be
20 prorated against the full-time NJ STARS award as follows: an
21 eligible student enrolled with six to eight credits shall receive one-
22 half of the value of a full-time award, and an eligible student
23 enrolled with nine to 11 credits shall receive three-quarters of a full-
24 time award. A student shall receive an additional semester of NJ
25 STARS II eligibility for each semester the student receives an
26 exemption from the full-time course of study requirement pursuant
27 to this subsection, not to exceed four additional semesters. Total NJ
28 STARS II payments shall not exceed \$5,000 for a student² .
29 (cf: P.L.2012, c.8, s.3)

30
31 4. This act shall take effect immediately.