

ASSEMBLY, No. 559

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ROBERT AUTH

District 39 (Bergen and Passaic)

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District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Provides for inclusion of students who receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school in NJ STARS Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning the NJ STARS Program and amending
2 P.L.2004, c.59.

3

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

6

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

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

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

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

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

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.

1 In the case of a student who receives equivalent instruction
2 elsewhere than at school, the scholarship shall be payable for the
3 first year of enrollment in a county college to a student who meets
4 such criteria of academic achievement as determined by the
5 authority.

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

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

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

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

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

32 (4) have graduated from high school in 2004 or later or
33 completed a high school curriculum through equivalent instruction
34 elsewhere than at school in 2018 or later, and not earlier than the
35 calendar year two years prior to the first calendar year in which a
36 scholarship payment is to be made; and

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

47 d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary
48 reasons from a county college shall no longer be eligible for a

1 scholarship under this act. If a student participating in the program
2 is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full
3 all amounts received under the program. The county college shall
4 be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any
5 overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under
6 the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-
7 10.

8 e. A student scholarship under the NJ STARS Program may be
9 renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid
10 application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the
11 requirements pursuant to subsection b. of this section.
12 (cf: P.L.2014, c.55, s.1)

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14 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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17 STATEMENT

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19 This bill includes in the NJ STARS Program students who
20 receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school, such as
21 home-schooled students. Under the bill's provisions, a NJ STARS
22 scholarship will be payable to a student who receives equivalent
23 instruction elsewhere than at school for the student's first year of
24 enrollment in a county college if the student meets academic
25 achievement criteria as determined by the Higher Education Student
26 Assistance Authority. Eligibility for a scholarship for the student's
27 second year of enrollment in a county college would remain as it is
28 currently for all NJ STARS scholarship recipients, based upon
29 academic performance in the first year of county college
30 enrollment. Students who receive equivalent instruction elsewhere
31 than at school will be eligible to receive a scholarship beginning in
32 the 2018-2019 academic year.