ASSEMBLY, No. 1281

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
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Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Mosquera

SYNOPSIS

Revises and renames NJSTARS; repeals NJSTARS II; establishes NJ HonorScholars Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ACT concerning college scholarships, revising various parts of the statutory law, and supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. Section 1 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81) is amended to read as follows:

1. **[**This act**]** P.L.2004, c. 59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall be known and may be cited as the "New Jersey **[**Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program**]** HonorScholars Act."

(cf: P.L.2004, c.59, s.1)

2. Section 3 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-83) is amended to read as follows:

3. As used in **[**this act**]** P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

"Authority" means the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

"Full-time course of study" in any semester for a county college student means a course of study, leading to a degree from the county college of enrollment, that includes at least 12 credit hours, not including any credit hours in a remedial or developmental curriculum. "Full-time course of study" in any semester for a student at a four-year public or independentinstitution of higher education means a course of study that includes at least 12 credit hours, not including any credit hours in a remedial or developmental curriculum, and leads to a degree from a New Jersey four-year public or independent institution of higher education.

"Program" means the New Jersey **[**Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS)**]** HonorScholars Program **[**for county college students**]**.

(cf: P.L.2004, c.59, s.3)

3. Section 4 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-84) is amended to read as follows:

4. There is hereby created the New Jersey **[**Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS)**]** HonorScholars Program for county college students and students attending a State public or independent four-year institution of higher education. It shall be the duty of the Higher Education Student Assistance

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.

Authority to administer the program.
(cf: P.L.2004, c.59, s.4)

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

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

b. A student shall be eligible for a county college scholarship under the [NJ STARS] New Jersey HonorScholars Program for up to five semesters, including summer sessions. The scholarship shall be payable for the first year of enrollment in a county college to a student who:

(1) has graduated high school and, in the case of a student who graduates in the [2013-2014] 2019-2020 school year and thereafter, whose class rank at the completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade was in the top [15.0%] 20.0% of the student's high school class, provided that in the case of students graduating from high schools that do not calculate the class rank of their students, the student's ranking at the completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade shall be determined by the high school in consultation with the authority; and

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

During a student's enrollment in a county college after the first year of enrollment, the scholarship shall be payable to that student if the student attains a grade point average of at least 3.0 by the start of the student's second year of county college enrollment. A

student who attains a grade point average of less than 3.0 at the start of the second semester of the student's first year of county college enrollment shall participate in an enrichment program designed by the county college during the second semester of the student's first year of enrollment.

c. To be eligible to receive a county college scholarship under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program a student shall:

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

(2) have applied for all other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be applied to tuition to reduce the amount of any county college scholarship that the student shall receive under the ⟦provisions of this act⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program;

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

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

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

d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons from a county college shall no longer be eligible for a county college scholarship under ⟦this act⟧ the New Jersey HonorScholars Program. If a student participating in the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all amounts received under the program. The county college shall be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under

the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

e. A ⟦student⟧ county college scholarship under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program may be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the requirements pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

(cf: P.L.2017, c.360, s.1)

5. Section 2 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.1) is amended to read as follows:

2. a. Upon notice from the authority in a student's senior year of high school of conditional eligibility for a county college scholarship under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program, a student who determines to pursue final eligibility for the program shall take a college placement test to determine readiness for college-level coursework. The test shall be selected by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges and administered by the county college of the county in which the student's school district is located at no cost to the student or the school district. A county college may enter into an agreement with the school district to administer the test at the high school or other selected site within the district.

b. A county college shall notify any student who does not achieve the required score on the placement test that the student requires remediation prior to pursuing county college coursework for credit under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program. The student shall have the responsibility to address the identified deficiencies through such means as the student determines, including enrollment in remedial classes at the county college during the senior year of high school.

c. Upon graduation from high school, if a student meets the eligibility criteria for receipt of ⟦an NJ STARS scholarship⟧ a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program but is not able to demonstrate the skill levels required to pursue courses for credit at a county college, the student shall not receive ⟦an NJ STARS⟧ a New Jersey HonorScholars scholarship until that ability is demonstrated. The student shall have one year from the September 1 next following the date of high school graduation to demonstrate such ability, and if at the end of the one-year period the student continues to require remediation, then the student shall lose eligibility for a county college scholarship under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program. If during or at the end of the one-year period the student demonstrates the required ability, then the student shall be eligible for ⟦an NJ STARS scholarship⟧ a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program for five semesters.

(cf: P.L.2008, c.124, s.2)

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

3. a. A student who receives ⟦an NJ STARS⟧ a county college New Jersey HonorScholars scholarship shall be eligible to take less than 12 credits in the final semester if the county college determines that the student needs to complete less than 12 credits in that semester to complete the degree program.

b. In the case of a student who is enrolled in an associate degree program regularly requiring six semesters, the student shall not receive ⟦an NJ STARS⟧ a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program for the sixth semester but shall maintain eligibility for ⟦the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship II (NJ STARS II) Program established pursuant to P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 et seq.)⟧ a scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program for the third and fourth years of academic study at a four-year public or independent institution of higher education pursuant to section 11 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), provided that the student meets the requirements for receipt of ⟦an NJ STARS II⟧ that scholarship.

c. A student who receives a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program shall be eligible to take less than 12 credits in a semester if the student provides to the college a written note from a physician or other licensed health care professional indicating the student's need to take a reduced number of credits due to a physical or mental health condition. A student who receives a medical exemption from the full-time course of study requirement pursuant to this subsection shall be eligible for additional semesters of eligibility for a county college New Jersey HonorScholars scholarship, as necessary.

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

7. Section 4 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.3) is amended to read as follows:

4. A student who is eligible for ⟦an NJ STARS⟧ a county college New Jersey HonorScholars Program scholarship who earned college credits while enrolled in high school may submit to the county college a transcript from the institution of higher education that awarded the credits. If the county college determines that the student's coursework is equivalent to that offered by the county college, then the county college shall apply the credits toward the award of the student's associate degree under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program.

(cf: P.L.2008, c.124, s.4)

8. Section 1 of P.L.2009, c.280 (C.18A:71B-85.5) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. In September of each school year, the board of education of a school district or the chief school administrator of a nonpublic school shall provide each student in the 9th grade with general information on the ⟦New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS)⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program ⟦created pursuant to P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.)⟧.

b. In September of each school year, the board of education of a school district or the chief school administrator of a nonpublic school shall notify each student in the 11th grade who is ranked in the top 25.0% of the class of his potential to qualify for a county college scholarship under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program if the student's class rank at the completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade is within the top ⟦15.0%⟧ 20.0% of the class.

The notification shall include information about the rigorous course of study required to qualify for the program.

A student in the 12th grade shall be notified of conditional eligibility for a county college scholarship under the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.1).

c. The notification by the board of education or chief school administrator required pursuant to subsections a. and b. of this section shall be communicated via regular or electronic mail or sent home with the student and include a brief description of the ⟦NJ STARS⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program and the requirements for eligibility for the program.

(cf: P.L.2014, c.55, s.2)

9. Section 5 of P.L.2012, c.8 (C.18A:71B-85.6) is amended to read as follows:

5. Each county college is encouraged to host an annual recruitment day and invite a representative from each four-year public and independent institution of higher education in the State for the purpose of recruiting students for a scholarship for the third and fourth years of academic study at the four-year institution under the ⟦NJ STARS II⟧ New Jersey HonorScholars Program.

(cf: P.L.2012, c.8, s.5)

10. (New section) a. The New Jersey HonorScholars Program shall offer scholarships to students at State public or independent four-year institutions of higher education. For an eligible student enrolled in a full-time course of study at a New Jersey four-year public or independent institution of higher education, the scholarship shall be applied toward the cost of tuition, subject to the prior application of other grants and scholarships against such costs as provided under paragraph (3) of subsection c. of this section. A

scholarship under the program shall be paid to the four-year institution in the amount of $2,000 per semester. The award amount shall not, when combined with any other financial assistance, exceed the student's actual tuition costs. The cost of a scholarship shall be paid 100% by the State. Any cost of attendance that is not covered by the scholarship or other available forms of grants and scholarships shall be paid by the student.

b. Except as provided in section 11 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a student shall be eligible for a scholarship under this section for up to eight semesters, excluding summer sessions, and in order to receive the scholarship the student shall have graduated in the top 10.0% of the student's high school graduating class. In the case of students graduating from high schools that do not calculate the class rank of their students, the student's ranking shall be determined by the high school in consultation with the authority.

c. A student shall be eligible to receive a scholarship to a State public or independent four-year institution of higher education if the student:

(1) has an annual family income, both taxable and non-taxable, as derived from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the academic year, of less than $250,000;

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

(3) has applied for all other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be applied to tuition to reduce the amount of any scholarship that the student receives under the provisions of the New Jersey HonorScholars Program;

(4) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection f. of this section, is enrolled in a full-time course of study at a four-year public or independent institution of higher education and maintains a 3.0 grade point average. A grade for credits earned during a summer semester shall for the purposes of this paragraph be included in the calculation of the grade point average for the preceding academic year; and

(5) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection f. of this section, maintains continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on medical leave due to the illness of the student or a member of the student's immediate family or emergency leave because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave shall have been approved by the four-year public or independent

institution of higher education, or unless called to partial or full mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons from a four-year public or independent institution of higher education shall no longer be eligible for a scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program. If a student participating in the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all amounts received under the program. The four-year public or independent institution of higher education shall be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

e. A scholarship at a four-year institution under the program may be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the requirements pursuant to this section.

f. A student who receives a scholarship at a four-year institution under the program shall be eligible to take less than 12 credits in a semester if the student provides to the institution a written note from a physician or other licensed health care professional indicating the student's need to take a reduced number of credits due to a physical or mental health condition. A student who receives a medical exemption from the full-time course of study requirement pursuant to this subsection shall be eligible for additional semesters of eligibility for a New Jersey HonorScholars Scholarship at a four-year institution, as necessary.

11. (New section) a. In addition to a student eligible for a scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program pursuant to subsection b. of section 10 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a student who is receiving a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program shall be eligible for a scholarship under the program at a State four-year public or independent institution of higher education for the student's third and fourth academic years pursuant to subsection b. of this section. The student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the program for up to four semesters, excluding summer sessions.

b. The student shall be eligible for a New Jersey HonorScholars Program scholarship for the student's third academic year of study if the student: attained an associates degree from a New Jersey county college; except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection c. of section 2 and subsection b. of section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.1 and C.18A:71B-85.2), received a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program for each semester of study in the county college or was eligible for

but did not receive a scholarship because the student's tuition was fully covered by other State or federal need-based grants or merit scholarships, or was eligible for but did not receive a scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program because the student was enrolled while a high school student in county college courses and received an associates degree in accordance with a joint program offered by the student's school district and a county college; attains a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 upon graduation from a county college; enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program at a New Jersey four-year public or independent institution of higher education for the third academic year of study in the academic year immediately following the student's attainment of an associates degree; and meets the criteria set forth in subsection c. of section 10 of P.L. , c (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

c. The provisions of subsections d. and e. of section 10 of P.L , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall apply to a student receiving a New Jersey HonorScholars Program scholarship pursuant to this section.

12. (New section) The policies and procedures set forth in the Statewide transfer agreement established pursuant to P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.) shall govern the transfer of academic credits awarded by a county college to a New Jersey HonorScholars Program student who subsequently enrolls in a four-year public institution of higher education and is participating in the New Jersey HonorScholars Program at the institution.

13. (New section) Nothing in sections 10 and 11 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall be construed to require a four-year public or independent institution of higher education to admit a student eligible for a scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program or to waive its admission standards and application procedures.

14. (New section) a. In September of each school year, the board of education of a school district or the chief school administrator of a nonpublic school shall notify each student in the 11th grade who is ranked in the top 15.0% of the class of his potential to qualify for a scholarship to a four-year public or independent institution of higher education under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program if the student's class rank at the time of graduation is within the top 10.0% of the graduating class.

A student in the 12th grade shall be notified of conditional eligibility for the New Jersey HonorScholars Program by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

b. The notification by the board of education or chief school administrator required pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall

be communicated via regular or electronic mail or sent home with the student and include a brief description of the New Jersey HonorScholars Program and the requirements for eligibility for the program.

15. (New section) a. In the case of a student who is receiving a scholarship under the NJ STARS Program and is in the first academic year of study on the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the scholarship shall be administered and the student shall remain eligible for the program in accordance with the provisions of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) as the same read before the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

b. In the case of a student who is receiving a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program and is in the third academic year of study on the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), or was eligible to receive an NJ STARS II scholarship for the third academic year of study but did not receive the scholarship because the student's tuition or tuition and fees, as applicable, was fully covered by other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, the scholarship shall be administered and the student shall remain eligible for the program in accordance with the provisions of P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 et seq.) as the same read before the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

16. (New section) a. Not later than two years following the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) and annually thereafter, the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall prepare and submit to the Legislature and the Governor a report on the implementation of the New Jersey HonorScholars Program. The report shall, for each institution of higher education, set forth statistics on and include an analysis of student participation in the program at the institution, the amounts of funding provided under the program to students enrolled at the institution, the amounts of funding made available to those participating students from State sources other than the New Jersey HonorScholars Program and from federal and institutional sources, and such other factors as the authority deems to be necessary or useful to the evaluation of the program.

b. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall establish appropriate criteria, procedures, and guidelines for awarding scholarships under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program to eligible students in accordance with the provisions of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). The

authority shall adopt in accordance with the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

17. The following sections are repealed:
Section 5 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.4);
Section 3 of P.L.2014, c.55 (C.18A:71B-85.5a);
Section 6 of P.L.2012, c.8 (C.18A:71B-85.7);
Section 6 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-86);
Sections 1 through 7 of P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 through C.18A:71B-86.7);
Section 9 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-86.4a); and
Section 7 of P.L.2012, c.8 (C.18A:71B-86.4b).

18. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first be applicable to the 2020-2021 academic year.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes the New Jersey HonorScholars Program and provides for the program to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

Under the bill, the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program is renamed, and is to become part of the New Jersey HonorScholars Program. Although the name of the NJ STARS scholarship is changed, the amount of the scholarship a county college student is eligible to receive remains the same. The eligibility criteria for the county college scholarship also remains the same, except the bill permits students to be eligible for the scholarship if their class rank at the completion of the 11th or 12th grade is in the top 20 percent of their high school class. Currently, a student must have a class rank in the top 15 percent of the class at the completion of the 11th or 12th grade.

Under the bill, the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship II (NJ STARS II) Program is repealed. In place of NJ STARS II, the bill provides for the New Jersey HonorScholars Program to offer scholarships to students to attend a State four-year public or independent institution of higher education. A scholarship to a four-year institution under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program is to be applied to the cost of tuition. A student is eligible to receive a scholarship of $2,000 for each semester of enrollment.

Two categories of students are eligible for a New Jersey HonorScholars Program scholarship to a four-year institution. A student who graduated from a county college and received a county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program is

eligible to receive a scholarship for the third and fourth academic years at a four-year institution. The student is required to have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 upon graduation from a county college. This student is eligible for a scholarship for up to four semesters, excluding summer sessions. Also, a student who graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class is eligible to receive a New Jersey HonorScholars Program scholarship to a four-year institution for all four years. These students are eligible for a scholarship under the program for up to eight semesters, excluding summer sessions.

To be eligible to participate in the program and receive a scholarship to a four-year institution, the bill provides that a student must:

(1) have annual family income, both taxable and non-taxable, as derived from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the academic year, of less than $250,000;

(2) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the authority;

(3) have applied for all other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships is to be applied to tuition to reduce the amount of any scholarship that the student receives pursuant to the program;

(4) be enrolled in a full-time course of study and maintain a 3.0 grade point average; and

(5) maintain continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on medical leave due to illness of the student or a member of the student's immediate family or emergency leave because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave must be approved by the four-year institution of higher education, or unless called to partial or full mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

The bill includes a grandfather provision that provides that a student receiving a scholarship under the NJ STARS Program and is in the first academic year of study at a county college on the effective date of the bill is to continue to receive the scholarship in accordance with the law governing NJ STARS as it read prior to the effective date of this bill. Similarly, a student receiving a scholarship under the NJ STARS II program who is in the third academic year of study at the institution of higher education will remain eligible for a scholarship under the program in accordance with the law as it read prior to the bill’s effective date.