

A bill for an act

relating to higher education; requiring higher education institutions to partner with high schools to promote college attendance; establishing the Minnesota promise for higher education and revising the achieve scholarship program; amending Minnesota Statutes 2008, sections 136A.121, by adding a subdivision; 136A.127, subdivisions 2, 4, 9, 10, 12, 14, by adding a subdivision; 136A.87; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 136A; repealing Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivisions 8, 13.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.121, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 20. **Institutional partnership with high schools.** An eligible institution in Minnesota that admits a student who receives a grant under this section must develop a partnership with at least two high schools that have a lower-than-average college attendance rate to promote academic preparation and college attendance. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education must maintain a current list of high schools in the state that have lower-than-average college attendance rates and are eligible to be considered a partner school under this provision. The activities under this subdivision must include making available to students, at very low cost or no cost, a college readiness assessment that meets recognized standards. Institutions must provide help to students and families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and must include a visit to a college campus in the activities.

Sec. 2. **[136A.123] MINNESOTA PROMISE.**

Subdivision 1. **Promise.** To the extent of available appropriations, an eligible student under section 136A.121 who has an income used to determine eligibility under

section 136A.121 that is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size, may receive a grant under section 136A.121 sufficient to pay an amount equal to the tuition and required fees at a public two-year community college or consolidated community and technical college under section 136A.121, subdivision 6, minus all other federal, state, private, or institutional gift aid. An eligible student may use the amount under this section at any eligible institution.

Subd. 2. **Informational materials.** The Minnesota Office of Higher Education must prepare and distribute materials under section 136A.87 to promote the Minnesota promise and the benefits of higher education for all students and particularly for students from low-income families.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **Definition; qualifying program.** For the purposes of this section, a "qualifying program" means a rigorous secondary school program of study defined by the Department of Education under agreement with the Secretary of Education for the purposes of determining eligibility for the federal Academic Competitiveness Grant Program under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. If a qualifying program includes a foreign language requirement, the foreign language requirement is waived for a student whose first language is not English and who attains English language proficiency.

Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

Subd. 4. **Student eligibility.** To be eligible to receive a scholarship under this section, in addition to the requirements listed under section 136A.121, a student must:

(1) submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);

~~(2) take and receive at least a grade of C for courses that comprise a rigorous secondary school~~ complete a qualifying program of study in a high school or in a home-school setting under section 120A.22, and graduate from a Minnesota high school, and graduate with an unweighted 2.5 grade point average or higher;

(3) have a family adjusted gross income of less than ~~\$75,000~~ 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size as reported in the federal need analysis in the last complete calendar year prior to the academic year of postsecondary attendance in which the scholarship awarded is first used. The Office of Higher Education or the postsecondary institution may request documentation to confirm income eligibility;

(4) be a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen, as defined in section 484 of the Higher Education Act, United States Code, title 20, sections 1091 et seq., as amended, and Code of Federal Regulations, title 34, section 668.33;

(5) be a Minnesota resident, as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8; ~~and~~

~~(6) be enrolled for at least three credits per quarter or semester or the equivalent~~
enroll full-time in the fall term immediately following high school graduation at an eligible institution as defined under section 136A.101, subdivision 4; and

(7) enroll in a degree, diploma, or certificate program at an eligible institution.

Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivision 9, is amended to read:

Subd. 9. **Scholarship awards.** ~~A student may not receive more than \$1,200 in Minnesota achieve scholarships, which must be for enrollment during the four-year availability period described in subdivision 12. The maximum amount of the scholarship is the amount remaining after deducting from the total amount of qualifying expenses under subdivision 10 all amounts of federal, state, private, and institutional grants and gift aid from any source and the amount under subdivision 10a. The scholarships scholarship~~
may be used to pay for qualifying expenses at eligible institutions.

Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivision 10, is amended to read:

Subd. 10. **Qualifying expenses.** Qualifying expenses are components included under the cost of attendance used for federal student financial aid programs, as defined in ~~section 472 of the Higher Education Act, United States Code, title 20, sections 1091-108711~~ et seq., as amended. The maximum qualifying expenses under this subdivision is the average total qualifying expenses at the four-year institutions of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 10a. **Student investment.** A student investment is required. The amount of the investment is equal to the average amount a student would earn working in an on-campus work study position for ten hours per week during a semester. The office must determine an amount under this subdivision, using available data about earnings, prior to determining the amount awarded under subdivision 9.

Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivision 12, is amended to read:

Subd. 12. **Availability of scholarship funds.** ~~A scholarship earned by a student is available for four years immediately following high school graduation. The office must certify to the commissioner of finance by October 1 of each year the amounts to be canceled from scholarship eligibility that have expired. Once a student has been awarded a scholarship under this section, the scholarship may be renewed for up to four consecutive award years of continuous enrollment in a degree, diploma, or certificate program at an eligible institution. The student must make satisfactory academic progress and have at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale for the first and subsequent award years of study to continue receiving a scholarship.~~

Sec. 9. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivision 14, is amended to read:

Subd. 14. **Evaluation report.** By January 15 of each ~~odd-numbered~~ year, the Office of Higher Education shall submit a report, to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy, regarding the ~~success of the program in increasing the enrollment of students in rigorous high school courses~~, including, at a minimum, the following information:

- (1) the demographics of individuals participating in the program;
- ~~(2) the grades scholarship recipients received for courses in the qualifying program under subdivision 2;~~
- ~~(3)~~ (2) the number of scholarship recipients who persisted at a postsecondary institution for a second year;
- ~~(4)~~ (3) the high schools attended by the program participants;
- ~~(5)~~ (4) the postsecondary institutions attended by the program participants;
- ~~(6)~~ (5) the academic performance of the students after enrolling in a postsecondary institution; and
- ~~(7)~~ (6) other information as ~~identified~~ determined by the director.

Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.87, is amended to read:

136A.87 PLANNING INFORMATION.

The office shall make available to all residents ~~from 8th~~ beginning in 7th grade through adulthood information about planning and preparing for postsecondary opportunities. Information must be provided to all ~~8th~~ 7th grade students and their parents annually by January 1 of each year September 30 ~~about the need to plan~~ planning for their postsecondary education. The office may also provide information to high school students and their parents, to adults, and to out-of-school youth. The information provided may include the following:

- 5.1 (1) the need to start planning early;
- 5.2 (2) the availability of assistance in educational planning from educational institutions
- 5.3 and other organizations;
- 5.4 (3) suggestions for studying effectively during high school;
- 5.5 (4) high school courses necessary to be adequately prepared for postsecondary
- 5.6 education;
- 5.7 (5) encouragement to involve parents actively in planning for all phases of education;
- 5.8 (6) information about ~~post-high school~~ postsecondary education and training
- 5.9 opportunities existing in the state, their respective missions and expectations for students,
- 5.10 their preparation requirements, admission requirements, and student placement;
- 5.11 (7) ways to evaluate and select postsecondary institutions;
- 5.12 (8) the process of transferring credits among Minnesota postsecondary institutions
- 5.13 and systems;
- 5.14 (9) the costs of postsecondary education and the availability of financial assistance
- 5.15 in meeting these costs, including specific information about the Minnesota promise and
- 5.16 achieve scholarship program;
- 5.17 (10) the interrelationship of assistance from student financial aid, public assistance,
- 5.18 and job training programs; and
- 5.19 (11) financial planning for postsecondary education ~~beyond high school~~.

5.20 Sec. 11. **REPEALER.**

5.21 Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 136A.127, subdivisions 8 and 13, are repealed.

136A.127 ACHIEVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

Subd. 8. **Documentation of qualifying household income.** Achieve scholarship program applicants must certify on the application that they meet the income eligibility requirement in subdivision 4, clause (3). The Office of Higher Education or the postsecondary institution may request documentation needed to confirm income eligibility.

Subd. 13. **Disbursement of scholarships.** The office shall make two equal payments to a postsecondary institution on behalf of the student. After the student successfully completes the first term of enrollment, the second payment must be made during the student's next term of enrollment at an eligible institution. If the second disbursement is not within the same academic year as the first disbursement, the student must request the second disbursement.