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SENATE BILL 5321

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State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senators Nobles, Das, Dhingra, Frockt, Hasegawa, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Randall, Saldaña, Stanford, and Wilson, C.

Read first time 01/21/21. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to the college bound scholarship; amending RCW  
2 28B.118.040; and reenacting and amending RCW 28B.118.010 and  
3 28B.118.090.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.118.010 and 2019 c 406 s 44 and 2019 c 298 s 1  
6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 The office of student financial assistance shall design the  
8 Washington college bound scholarship program in accordance with this  
9 section and in alignment with the Washington college grant program in  
10 chapter 28B.92 RCW unless otherwise provided in this section.

11 (1) "Eligible students" are those students who:

12 (a) Qualify for free or reduced-price lunches (~~(-~~  
13 ~~(i) If a student qualifies~~) in the seventh (~~(~~o~~))~~, eighth, or  
14 ninth grades (~~(, the)~~). A student remains eligible even if the student  
15 does not receive free or reduced-price lunches thereafter (~~(-~~  
16 ~~(ii) Beginning in the 2019-20 academic year, if a student~~  
17 ~~qualifies~~);

18 (b) Qualify for free or reduced-price lunches in the (~~(ninth))~~  
19 10th grade and (~~(was)~~) were previously ineligible during the seventh  
20 (~~(~~o~~))~~, eighth, or ninth grade while (~~(he or she was)~~) a student in

1 Washington(~~(, the student is eligible for the college bound~~  
2 ~~scholarship program)~~);

3 ~~((b))~~ (c) Are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and:

4 (i) In grade seven through twelve; or

5 (ii) Are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one and have not  
6 graduated from high school; or

7 ~~((e))~~ (d) Were dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and were  
8 adopted between the ages of fourteen and eighteen with a negotiated  
9 adoption agreement that includes continued eligibility for the  
10 Washington state college bound scholarship program pursuant to RCW  
11 74.13A.025.

12 (2) Eligible students and the students' parents or guardians  
13 shall be notified of the student's eligibility for the Washington  
14 college bound scholarship program. Students and the students' parents  
15 or guardians shall also be notified of the requirements for award of  
16 the scholarship.

17 (3) (a) To be eligible for a Washington college bound scholarship,  
18 a student eligible under subsection (1)(a)~~((i))~~ or (b) of this  
19 section must ~~((sign))~~ complete a pledge ~~((during seventh or eighth~~  
20 ~~grade or a student eligible under subsection (1)(a)(ii) of this~~  
21 ~~section must sign a pledge during ninth grade))~~ prior to the  
22 beginning of their eleventh grade year. The pledge must include a  
23 commitment to graduate from high school ~~((with at least a C average~~  
24 ~~and with no felony convictions))~~. The pledge must be witnessed by a  
25 parent or guardian and forwarded to the office of student financial  
26 assistance by mail or electronically, as indicated on the pledge  
27 form.

28 (b) (i) ~~((Beginning in the 2018-19 academic year, the))~~ The office  
29 of student financial assistance shall make multiple attempts to  
30 secure ~~((the signature of))~~ a completed pledge from the student's  
31 parent or guardian for the purpose of witnessing the pledge.

32 (ii) If ~~((the signature of))~~ a completed pledge by the student's  
33 parent or guardian is not obtained, the office of student financial  
34 assistance may partner with the school counselor or administrator to  
35 secure the parent's or guardian's signature to witness the pledge.  
36 The school counselor or administrator shall make multiple attempts  
37 via all phone numbers, email addresses, and mailing addresses on  
38 record to secure the parent's or guardian's ~~((signature))~~ completion  
39 of the pledge. All attempts to contact the parent or guardian must be  
40 documented and maintained in the student's official file.

1 (iii) If a parent(~~(s)~~) or guardian(~~(s signature)~~) is still not  
2 (~~obtained~~) able to complete the pledge, the school counselor or  
3 administrator shall indicate to the office of student financial  
4 assistance the nature of the unsuccessful efforts to contact the  
5 student's parent or guardian and the reasons the signature is not  
6 available. Then the school counselor or administrator may witness the  
7 pledge unless the parent or guardian has indicated that he or she  
8 does not wish for the student to participate in the program.

9 (c) A student eligible under subsection (1)(~~(b)~~) (c) of this  
10 section shall be automatically enrolled, with no action necessary by  
11 the student or the student's family, and the enrollment form must be  
12 forwarded by the department of social and health services to the  
13 office of student financial assistance by mail or electronically, as  
14 indicated on the form.

15 (4)(a) Scholarships shall be awarded to eligible students  
16 graduating from public high schools under RCW 28A.150.010, approved  
17 private high schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or who received home-  
18 based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW.

19 (b)(i) To receive the Washington college bound scholarship, a  
20 student must (~~(graduate with at least a "C" average from a public~~  
21 ~~high school or an approved private high school under chapter 28A.195~~  
22 ~~RCW in Washington or have received home-based instruction under~~  
23 ~~chapter 28A.200 RCW, must have no felony convictions, and must~~) be a  
24 resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a) through (e). A  
25 student who is eligible to receive the Washington college bound  
26 scholarship because the student is a resident student under RCW  
27 28B.15.012(2)(e) must provide the institution, as defined in RCW  
28 28B.15.012, an affidavit indicating that the individual will file an  
29 application to become a permanent resident at the earliest  
30 opportunity the individual is eligible to do so and a willingness to  
31 engage in any other activities necessary to acquire citizenship,  
32 including but not limited to citizenship or civics review courses.

33 (ii) For eligible children as defined in subsection (1)(~~(b)~~  
34 ~~and~~) (c) and (d) of this section, to receive the Washington college  
35 bound scholarship, a student must have received a high school  
36 equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 or have  
37 graduated (~~(with at least a "C" average)~~) from a public high school  
38 or an approved private high school under chapter 28A.195 RCW in  
39 Washington or have received home-based instruction under chapter

1 28A.200 RCW(~~(, must have no felony convictions)~~), and must be a  
2 resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a) through (e).

3 ~~((For a student who does not meet the "C" average requirement,  
4 and who completes fewer than two quarters in the running start  
5 program, under chapter 28A.600 RCW, the student's first quarter of  
6 running start course grades must be excluded from the student's  
7 overall grade point average for purposes of determining their  
8 eligibility to receive the scholarship.))~~

9 (5) A student's family income will be assessed upon graduation  
10 before awarding the scholarship. If at graduation from high school  
11 the student's family income does not exceed sixty-five percent of the  
12 state median family income, scholarship award amounts shall be as  
13 provided in this section.

14 (6)(a) For students attending two or four-year institutions of  
15 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, the value of the award  
16 shall be (i) the difference between the student's tuition and  
17 required fees, less the value of any state-funded grant, scholarship,  
18 or waiver assistance the student receives; (ii) plus five hundred  
19 dollars for books and materials.

20 (b) For students attending private four-year institutions of  
21 higher education in Washington, the award amount shall be the  
22 representative average of awards granted to students in public  
23 research universities in Washington or the representative average of  
24 awards granted to students in public research universities in  
25 Washington in the 2014-15 academic year, whichever is greater.

26 (c) For students attending private vocational schools in  
27 Washington, the award amount shall be the representative average of  
28 awards granted to students in public community and technical colleges  
29 in Washington or the representative average of awards granted to  
30 students in public community and technical colleges in Washington in  
31 the 2014-15 academic year, whichever is greater.

32 (7) Recipients may receive no more than four full-time years'  
33 worth of scholarship awards.

34 (8) Institutions of higher education shall award the student all  
35 need-based and merit-based financial aid for which the student would  
36 otherwise qualify. The Washington college bound scholarship is  
37 intended to replace unmet need, loans, and, at the student's option,  
38 work-study award before any other grants or scholarships are reduced.

39 (9) The first scholarships shall be awarded to students  
40 graduating in 2012.

1 (10) The state of Washington retains legal ownership of tuition  
2 units awarded as scholarships under this chapter until the tuition  
3 units are redeemed. These tuition units shall remain separately held  
4 from any tuition units owned under chapter 28B.95 RCW by a Washington  
5 college bound scholarship recipient.

6 (11) The scholarship award must be used within five years of  
7 receipt. Any unused scholarship tuition units revert to the  
8 Washington college bound scholarship account.

9 (12) Should the recipient terminate his or her enrollment for any  
10 reason during the academic year, the unused portion of the  
11 scholarship tuition units shall revert to the Washington college  
12 bound scholarship account.

13 (13) Eligible students enrolled in the Washington college bound  
14 scholarship program under proclamation 20-77 by the governor  
15 effective December 8, 2020, must complete a college bound scholarship  
16 pledge as required under subsection (3) of this section and shall be  
17 awarded a college bound scholarship provided they meet all other  
18 eligibility criteria.

19 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.118.040 and 2019 c 298 s 2 are each amended to  
20 read as follows:

21 The office of student financial assistance shall:

22 (1) With the assistance of the office of the superintendent of  
23 public instruction, implement and administer the Washington college  
24 bound scholarship program;

25 (2) Develop and distribute, to all schools with students enrolled  
26 in grades seven through ~~((nine))~~ 10, a pledge form that can be  
27 completed and returned electronically or by mail by the student or  
28 the school to the office of student financial assistance;

29 (3) Develop and implement a student application, selection, and  
30 notification process for scholarships ~~((, which includes working with~~  
31 ~~other state agencies, law enforcement, or the court system to verify~~  
32 ~~that eligible students do not have felony convictions))~~. In  
33 collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public  
34 instruction, the office shall devise and implement procedures for  
35 efficiently, promptly, and accurately identifying and enrolling  
36 students who are eligible under RCW 28B.118.010(1);

37 (4) Annually in March, with the assistance of the office of the  
38 superintendent of public instruction, distribute to tenth grade  
39 college bound scholarship students and their families: (a)

1 Notification that, to qualify for the scholarship, a student's family  
2 income may not exceed sixty-five percent of the state median family  
3 income at graduation from high school; (b) the current year's value  
4 for sixty-five percent of the state median family income; and (c) a  
5 statement that a student should consult their school counselor if  
6 their family makes, or is projected to make, more than this value  
7 before the student graduates;

8 (5) Develop comprehensive social media outreach with grade-level  
9 specific information designed to keep students on track to graduate  
10 and leverage current tools such as the high school and beyond plan  
11 required by the state board of education and the ready set grad  
12 website maintained by the student achievement council;

13 (6) Track scholarship recipients to ensure continued eligibility  
14 and determine student compliance for awarding of scholarships;

15 (7) Within existing resources, collaborate with college access  
16 providers and K-12, postsecondary, and youth-serving organizations to  
17 map and coordinate mentoring and advising resources across the state;

18 (8) Subject to appropriation, deposit funds into the state  
19 educational trust fund;

20 (9) Purchase tuition units under the advanced college tuition  
21 payment program in chapter 28B.95 RCW to be owned and held in trust  
22 by the office of student financial assistance, for the purpose of  
23 scholarship awards as provided for in this section; and

24 (10) Distribute scholarship funds, in the form of tuition units  
25 purchased under the advanced college tuition payment program in  
26 chapter 28B.95 RCW or through direct payments from the state  
27 educational trust fund, to institutions of higher education on behalf  
28 of scholarship recipients identified by the office, as long as  
29 recipients maintain satisfactory academic progress.

30 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.118.090 and 2019 c 406 s 45 and 2019 c 298 s 3  
31 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

32 (1) Beginning January 1, 2015, and at a minimum every year  
33 thereafter, the student achievement council and all institutions of  
34 higher education eligible to participate in the college bound  
35 scholarship program shall ensure data needed to analyze and evaluate  
36 the effectiveness of the college bound scholarship program is  
37 promptly transmitted to the education data center created in RCW  
38 43.41.400 so that it is available and easily accessible. The data to  
39 be reported should include but not be limited to:

1           (a) The number of students (~~(who sign up)~~) eligible for the  
2 college bound scholarship program in seventh, eighth, (~~(or)~~) ninth,  
3 or 10th grade;  
4           (b) The number of college bound scholarship students who graduate  
5 from high school;  
6           (c) The number of college bound scholarship students who enroll  
7 in postsecondary education;  
8           (d) Persistence and completion rates of college bound scholarship  
9 recipients disaggregated by institutions of higher education;  
10          (e) College bound scholarship recipient grade point averages;  
11          (f) The number of college bound scholarship recipients who did  
12 not remain eligible and reasons for ineligibility;  
13          (g) College bound scholarship program costs; and  
14          (h) Impacts to the Washington college grant program.  
15          (2) Beginning May 12, 2015, and at a minimum every December 1st  
16 thereafter, the student achievement council shall submit student unit  
17 record data for the college bound scholarship program applicants and  
18 recipients to the education data center.

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