

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

H.B. 129
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE DRH40069-TCa-7 (01/29)

Short Title: High Achieving Tuition Scholarships. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Elmore, Dobson, Holloway, and McNeill (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO CREATE THE HIGH ACHIEVING TUITION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
3 FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TOP PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
4 ATTENDING NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** Purpose of Program. – There is created the High Achieving Tuition
7 Scholarship Program. The purposes of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program
8 include the following:

- 9 (1) Decrease the strain that universities are experiencing from serving an
10 increasing number of students.
11 (2) Decrease the drop off in enrollment of students in their sophomore year.
12 (3) Encourage higher performing students at community colleges.
13 (4) Utilize the State's educational resources to the fullest.
14 (5) Create more educational and career options for students.
15 (6) Realize significant cost savings to the State.
16 (7) Develop a more competitive workforce.

17 **SECTION 2.** Scholarship Eligibility. – A student shall be eligible to receive a High
18 Achieving Tuition Scholarship if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- 19 (1) Within seven months prior to applying for the scholarship, graduates with at
20 least a 3.5 unweighted grade point average from either a (i) public high
21 school located in this State or (ii) a nonpublic high school or home school, as
22 defined in Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, located in this
23 State.
24 (2) Presents evidence of United States citizenship.
25 (3) Qualifies as a resident of this State for tuition purposes, as provided in
26 Article 14 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes.
27 (4) Gains admission as a degree-seeking student at a North Carolina community
28 college.
29 (5) Complies with Selective Service registration requirements.

30 **SECTION 3.** Award of Scholarships. – The State Education Assistance Authority
31 (Authority) shall annually award High Achieving Tuition Scholarships to all eligible students in
32 an amount not to exceed the cost of 16 credit hours of tuition per fall or spring academic
33 semester for a maximum of four academic semesters. The Authority shall require students to
34 complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for a scholarship
35 award and shall reduce the amount of the scholarship award for any student by the amount of
36 grants or scholarships received by that student from other sources. The Authority shall award



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1 scholarships to eligible students in the order in which they are received. The Authority shall
2 award scholarships beginning with the fall semester of the 2016-2017 school year to students
3 graduating from high school in the 2015-2016 school year.

4 **SECTION 4. Scholarship Renewal.** – A scholarship awarded to an eligible student
5 shall be renewed if the student demonstrates maintenance of satisfactory academic progress by
6 maintaining a 3.0 grade point average and completion of a minimum of 30 semester credit
7 hours by the end of the academic year.

8 **SECTION 5. Scholarship Revocation.** – A scholarship awarded to an eligible
9 student shall be revoked for any of the following at the conclusion of each semester:

- 10 (1) Failure to maintain a 2.5 grade point average.
- 11 (2) Failure to maintain a course load of at least 12 credit hours.
- 12 (3) Default or unpaid refund on a student financial aid program.
- 13 (4) Felony convictions for a controlled substances offense under Article 5 of
14 Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

15 **SECTION 6. Scholarship Administration.** – The Authority shall adopt rules for
16 administration of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program.

17 **SECTION 7. Course Counseling and Transfer.** – The State Board of Community
18 Colleges shall adopt rules requiring community colleges to ensure that scholarship recipients
19 are provided counseling and assistance in selecting coursework that reflects their educational
20 and career goals. For students planning to enter a constituent institution of The University of
21 North Carolina, the State Board of Community Colleges shall ensure that credits earned by
22 those students participating in the program are transferable.

23 **SECTION 8.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Education
24 Assistance Authority the sum of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year
25 for administrative costs and award of scholarships. It is the intent of the General Assembly to
26 appropriate three million five hundred thousand dollars (\$3,500,000) in recurring funds for the
27 2017-2018 fiscal year for administrative costs and award of scholarships. Any unexpended
28 funds for this purpose shall not revert at the end of each fiscal year but shall remain available to
29 award scholarships to eligible students.

30 **SECTION 9.** The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall
31 adopt a policy to permit any student admitted to a constituent university who receives a High
32 Achieving Tuition Scholarship to defer admission to the constituent institution for two years,
33 beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

34 **SECTION 10.(a)** For the 2015-2016 school year, the State Board of Education
35 shall direct local boards of education to survey high school students in their senior year who
36 meet the eligibility requirements of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship to determine
37 interest in the program, including numbers of students who intend to apply for the scholarship,
38 and reasons that eligible students may choose not to apply for the scholarship. The State Board
39 of Education shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later than
40 December 1, 2015, on the results of this survey.

41 **SECTION 10.(b)** The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina
42 and the State Board of Community Colleges shall jointly identify and report to the Joint
43 Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 1, 2016, on potential issues related to the
44 transition of High Achieving Tuition Scholarship recipients from community college to
45 university enrollment, and other recommendations to improve and expand the High Achieving
46 Tuition Scholarship Program.

47 **SECTION 10.(c)** The State Education Assistance Authority shall report annually
48 on or before March 1, beginning in 2017, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight
49 Committee on the implementation of the High Achieving Tuition Scholarship Program. The
50 report shall include the following information:

- 1 (1) Number of students applying for the scholarship, including information
2 about student demographics and geographic location.
3 (2) Number of students awarded the scholarship, including information about
4 student demographics and geographic location, and community college
5 attended.
6 (3) Amount of funds expended for scholarships.
7 (4) Number of students whose scholarships were revoked and reasons for
8 revocation.
9 (5) Other relevant information, as determined by the State Education Assistance
10 Authority.

11 **SECTION 11.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2015.