

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION  
4 FOR

5 HOUSE BILL NO. 1282

6 By: Caldwell (Chad)

7 SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

8 An Act relating to scholarships; amending 70 O.S.  
9 2021, Section 2401, which relates to the Oklahoma  
10 State Regents' Academic Scholars Act; renaming act to  
11 Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Act; amending 70 O.S.  
12 2021, Section 2402, which relates to the Oklahoma  
13 State Regents' Scholars Program; renaming program to  
14 Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program; amending 70  
15 O.S. 2021, Section 2403, which relates to  
16 eligibility; updating name of program; providing for  
17 scholarship awards; limiting amount of scholarship  
18 awards; requiring certain institutions provide  
19 certain tuition waivers; including tuition in certain  
20 scholarships; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2404,  
21 which relates to the order to award scholarships;  
22 updating program name; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section  
23 2405, which relates to adoption of rules; updating  
24 names; providing for waiver portability; amending 70  
O.S. 2021, Sections 2406 and 2407, which relate to  
the Oklahoma State Regents' Academic Scholars Act;  
updating names; providing an effective date; and  
declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2401,  
is amended to read as follows:

1 Section 2401. Sections ~~4~~ 2401 through ~~10~~ 2407 of this  
2 ~~act~~ title shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma  
3 ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award Act-~~".

4 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2402,  
5 is amended to read as follows:

6 Section 2402. A. There is hereby created the Oklahoma  
7 ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program. The  
8 purpose of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising~~  
9 ~~Scholars Award Program~~ is to retain top-ranked students from  
10 Oklahoma in Oklahoma colleges, enable Oklahoma institutions  
11 of higher education to compete aggressively for top Oklahoma  
12 scholars, attract high-caliber out-of-state students to  
13 Oklahoma to attend colleges and universities, and enhance the  
14 academic quality in Oklahoma colleges and universities. The  
15 program shall provide participants funding for enrollment  
16 fees, tuition and other fees, room and board and required  
17 textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of  
18 undergraduate and/or graduate study at accredited  
19 institutions of higher education in Oklahoma.

20 B. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
21 administer the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~  
22 ~~Rising Scholars Award~~ Program.

23 SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2403, is  
24 amended to read as follows:

1 Section 2403. A. No person shall be eligible to participate in  
2 the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program  
3 unless the person:

4 1. Has complied with all of the rules promulgated by the  
5 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education pursuant to the  
6 provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars  
7 Award Act, Section 2401 et seq. of this title, for the award,  
8 regulation, and administration of scholarships; and

9 2. Qualifies as one of the following:

10 a. an Individual Applicant Qualified Student, which shall  
11 mean a student who is a resident of the State of  
12 Oklahoma whose American College Testing Program score  
13 or whose Scholastic Aptitude Test score falls within  
14 the 99.5 to 100.0 percentile levels as administered in  
15 the State of Oklahoma and whose grade point average  
16 and/or class rank is exceptional, as determined by the  
17 State Regents,

18 b. a Presidential Scholar, which shall mean a student  
19 selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars  
20 administered by the United States Department of  
21 Education,

22 c. a National Merit Scholar, which shall mean a student  
23 designated as a National Merit Scholar by the National  
24 Merit Scholarship Corporation,

- 1           d.    a National Merit Finalist, which shall mean a student  
2                    designated as a National Merit Finalist by the  
3                    National Merit Scholarship Corporation, or  
4            e.    after October 1, 1999, an Institutional Nominee, which  
5                    shall mean a student nominated by an institution in  
6                    The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education:  
7                    (1) whose American College Testing Program or  
8                        Scholastic Aptitude Test score falls within the  
9                        95.0 to 99.49 percentile levels, or  
10                  (2) who shows exceptional academic achievement as  
11                        evidenced by factors, including, but not limited  
12                        to, grade point average, class rank, national  
13                        awards, scholastic achievements, honors, and who  
14                        shows exceptional promise based on documentation  
15                        that may include, but not be limited to, teacher  
16                        recommendations, extracurricular activities, and  
17                        evidence of overcoming economic and social  
18                        obstacles as determined by the State Regents.  
19                        The State Regents shall ensure that standards of  
20                        high academic ability are documented.  
21                        Scholarship awards to Institutional Nominees  
22                        shall become effective when appropriate  
23                        documentation is verified by the State Regents.

1 B. No person shall be eligible to receive a scholarship  
2 pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~  
3 Rising Scholars Award Program unless the person is enrolled as a  
4 full-time student at a public or private accredited institution of  
5 higher education in Oklahoma.

6 C. ~~The~~ For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraphs a  
7 through d of paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject  
8 to the availability of funds, the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~  
9 Rising Scholars Award Program shall provide a scholarship in an  
10 amount not to exceed the ~~average~~ costs of all enrollment fees,  
11 tuition and other fees, room and board, and all required textbooks  
12 or materials for up to five (5) years of undergraduate and/or  
13 graduate study at an accredited public or private institution of  
14 higher education in Oklahoma ~~as provided in subsection E of this~~  
15 ~~section~~. The State Regents may establish separate scholarship award  
16 levels for each qualifying category.

17 1. If the student is attending an institution within The  
18 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the total funding for the  
19 scholarship provided in this subsection, exclusive of any  
20 internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this  
21 subsection at the institution attended as determined annually by the  
22 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

23 2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher  
24 education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this

1 subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs  
2 for items specified in this subsection at an institution of The  
3 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of comparable type which  
4 has the highest general enrollment fees of its type of institution  
5 in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as determined  
6 annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

7 D. For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraph e of  
8 paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject to the  
9 availability of funds, the Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program  
10 shall provide a scholarship in an amount not to exceed the average  
11 costs of all enrollment fees and other fees, room and board, and all  
12 required textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of  
13 undergraduate and/or graduate study at an accredited public or  
14 private institution of higher education in Oklahoma. The State  
15 Regents may establish separate scholarship award levels for each  
16 qualifying category.

17 1. If the student is attending an institution within The  
18 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the institution shall  
19 provide a tuition waiver not to exceed the average cost of tuition.  
20 The total funding for the scholarship and waiver provided for  
21 students attending an institution within The Oklahoma State System  
22 of Higher Education as provided in this subsection, exclusive of any  
23 internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this  
24

1 subsection at the institution attended as determined annually by the  
2 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

3 2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher  
4 education in Oklahoma, the scholarship shall include an amount not  
5 to exceed the average cost of tuition. The total funding for  
6 scholarships for students attending a private institution as  
7 provided in this subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not  
8 exceed the costs for items specified in this subsection at an  
9 institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of  
10 comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its  
11 type of institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education  
12 as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
13 Education.

14 E. If a person identifies himself or herself as a student with  
15 a disability and requests consideration for a scholarship under the  
16 Academic Oklahoma Rising Scholars Program Award by means other than  
17 standard testing procedures, the State Regents shall determine what  
18 means of assessment are appropriate and upon the basis of said  
19 assessment results, determine what level of award, if any, shall be  
20 made.

21 ~~E. 1. If the student is attending an institution of The~~  
22 ~~Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the total funding for the~~  
23 ~~scholarship provided in this section, exclusive of any internships,~~  
24 ~~shall not exceed the costs for items specified in subsection C of~~

1 ~~this section at the institution attended as determined annually by~~  
2 ~~the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.~~

3 ~~2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher~~  
4 ~~education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this~~  
5 ~~section, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs~~  
6 ~~for items specified in subsection C of this section at an~~  
7 ~~institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of~~  
8 ~~comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its~~  
9 ~~type institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as~~  
10 ~~determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher~~  
11 ~~Education.~~

12 SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2404, is  
13 amended to read as follows:

14 Section 2404. A. Scholarships awarded under the Oklahoma State  
15 ~~Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall be awarded to  
16 all eligible applicants without any limitation on the number of  
17 scholarships to be awarded in any year other than the amount of  
18 funds available for the scholarship program and the number of  
19 eligible applicants.

20 B. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may, at the  
21 time a scholarship is awarded to a student, set aside in the  
22 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Trust Fund  
23 funds for the full five-year commitment made to such eligible  
24 scholar. For all academic years, students who have previously



1 received academic scholarships under the provisions of this act and  
2 who have continued at all times to fulfill the requirements for  
3 eligibility to receive academic scholarships provided in this act  
4 shall be given an absolute priority for continued financial support  
5 by the Oklahoma ~~State Regents'~~ Academic Rising Scholars Award  
6 Program superior to any students who are applying for such academic  
7 ~~scholarships~~ awards for the first time.

8 C. In addition to the qualifications specified in Section 2403  
9 of this title, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may  
10 adopt additional criteria for selection and allocation of awards  
11 which may include, but are not limited to, consideration of high  
12 school academic performance and personal interviews. The Oklahoma  
13 State Regents for Higher Education shall annually report on the  
14 number of former ~~Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Academic Rising Scholars Award Program participants  
15 who stay in state as compared to those who leave Oklahoma within  
16 five (5) years of leaving the Award Program. In addition, the  
17 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby authorized to  
18 determine a maximum number of awards or a maximum amount of funding  
19 which may go to nonresident students. Such maximum limitations  
20 shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the awards or amount  
21 of funding in any category provided in paragraph 2 of subsection A  
22 of Section 2403 of this title.

23 SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2405, is  
24 amended to read as follows:

1 Section 2405. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
2 may adopt rules and regulations, prescribe and provide appropriate  
3 forms for application, and employ such persons, contract for such  
4 services and make such additional expenditures as may be necessary  
5 or appropriate for implementing the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State~~  
6 ~~Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Act; provided, as part of  
7 the regulations adopted for administration of the provisions of the  
8 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program, the  
9 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall require that each  
10 scholarship recipient make continuing and satisfactory progress  
11 toward a degree, including the establishment of an annual minimum  
12 grade point average and annual minimum credit hours to be maintained  
13 by the participants. Such regulations shall also provide for  
14 revoking or rescinding assistance to any scholarship recipient who  
15 fails to meet such required standards. Such regulations shall also  
16 provide that the funds made available to students as part of the  
17 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall  
18 be paid directly to the institution of the student's choice, in  
19 trust for the student, and on the student's behalf, and shall  
20 contain appropriate restrictions and conditions that such monies are  
21 expended only for the purposes authorized by this act. Such  
22 regulations shall also provide for portability of award for a  
23 recipient among accredited institutions of higher education in  
24 Oklahoma in which the recipient may enroll as long as the recipient

1 meets requirements of the program; however, waivers shall only be  
2 portable between institutions in The Oklahoma State System of Higher  
3 Education and waiver portability may be further limited by the  
4 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education rules and regulations.

5 SECTION 6. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2406, is  
6 amended to read as follows:

7 Section 2406. ~~The Oklahoma State Regents' Academic~~ Rising  
8 Scholars Award Act shall not be construed as granting any authority  
9 to control or influence the policies of any educational institution  
10 because it accepts students who are participating in the scholarship  
11 program, or to require any such institution to admit, or once  
12 admitted to continue in such institution, any participant in the  
13 scholarship program.

14 SECTION 7. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2407, is  
15 amended to read as follows:

16 Section 2407. As part of its duties in administering the  
17 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program, the  
18 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, in cooperation with the  
19 State Board of Education, shall encourage Oklahoma high school  
20 juniors who plan to attend college to take the Preliminary  
21 Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test  
22 in their junior year in high school as preparation for taking the  
23 Scholastic Aptitude Test their senior year in high school.

24 SECTION 8. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

1 SECTION 9. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
2 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
3 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
4 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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