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**ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1236**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** House Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Johnson, Santos, Lytton, Moscoso, Pettigrew, Walkinshaw, Kilduff, Sawyer, Reykdal, Bergquist, Fey, Tarleton, and Hudgins)

AN ACT Relating to eliminating the parent or guardian approval requirement for the college bound scholarship pledge; amending RCW 28B.118.040; and reenacting and amending RCW 28B.118.010.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.118.010 and 2012 c 229 s 402 and 2012 c 163 s 8 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

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

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

(a) Qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. If a student qualifies in the seventh grade, the student remains eligible even if the student does not receive free or reduced-price lunches thereafter; or

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

(i) In grade seven through twelve; or

(ii) Are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one and have not graduated from high school.

(2) Eligible students and the students' parents or guardians shall be notified of ((~~their~~)) the student's eligibility for the Washington college bound scholarship program beginning in ((~~their~~)) the student's seventh grade year. Students and the students' parents or guardians shall also be notified of the requirements for award of the scholarship.

(3)(a) To be eligible for a Washington college bound scholarship, a student eligible under subsection (1)(a) of this section must sign a pledge during seventh or eighth grade that includes a commitment to graduate from high school with at least a C average and with no felony convictions. The pledge must be witnessed by a parent or guardian and forwarded to the office of student financial assistance by mail or electronically, as indicated on the pledge form.

(b)(i) Beginning in the 2015-16 academic year, the office of student financial assistance shall make multiple attempts to secure the signature of the student's parent or guardian for the purpose of witnessing the pledge.

(ii) If the signature of the student's parent or guardian is not obtained, the office of student financial assistance may partner with the school counselor or administrator to secure the parent's or guardian's signature to witness the pledge.

(iii) If a parent's or guardian's signature is still not obtained, the school counselor or administrator may witness the pledge and indicate to the office of student financial assistance the nature of the unsuccessful efforts to contact the student's parent or guardian.

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

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

(b) To receive the Washington college bound scholarship, a student must graduate with at least a "C" average from a public high school or an approved private high school under chapter 28A.195 RCW in Washington or have received home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, must have no felony convictions, and must be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a) through (d).

(5) A student's family income will be assessed upon graduation before awarding the scholarship.

(6) If at graduation from high school the student's family income does not exceed sixty-five percent of the state median family income, scholarship award amounts shall be as provided in this section.

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

(b) For students attending private four-year institutions of higher education in Washington, the award amount shall be the representative average of awards granted to students in public research universities in Washington.

(c) For students attending private vocational schools in Washington, the award amount shall be the representative average of awards granted to students in public community and technical colleges in Washington.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.118.040 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 228 are each amended to read as follows:

The office of student financial assistance shall:

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

(2) Develop and distribute, to all schools with students enrolled in grade seven or eight, a pledge form that can be completed and returned electronically or by mail by the student or the school to the office of student financial assistance;

(3) Develop and implement a student application, selection, and notification process for scholarships;

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

(5) Subject to appropriation, deposit funds into the state educational trust fund;

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

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

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