

Chapter 578

(House Bill 1245)

AN ACT concerning

**Guaranteed Access Grant and Next Generation Scholars of Maryland –
Alterations**

FOR the purpose of altering the eligibility criteria for certain students to prequalify for a Guaranteed Access Grant; requiring the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program to provide certain assistance to certain students; altering the fiscal years in which the Governor is required to include a certain appropriation in the annual budget bill for the Program; requiring that a certain report be made to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year; and generally relating to the Guaranteed Access Grant and the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
 Article – Education
 Section 18–303(a) and 18–303.1(a)
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – Education
 Section 18–303(e) and 18–303.1(e), (g), and (j)
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

18–303.

(a) Subject to subsection (e) of this section, each recipient of a Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award shall:

(1) Be accepted for admission in the regular undergraduate program at an eligible institution or be enrolled in a 2–year associate degree program in which the course work is acceptable for transfer credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible institution;

(2) Except as provided in § 18–303.2 of this subtitle, be a resident of this State;

(3) Demonstrate a definite financial need to:

(i) For an Educational Assistance Grant, the Office; or

(ii) For a Guaranteed Access Grant, the Office or an institution of higher education that complies with § 18–303.3 of this subtitle; and

(4) Accept any other conditions attached to the award.

(e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a student in grade 7 or grade 8 who applies and qualifies for a Guaranteed Access Grant on the basis of financial need as established by the Commission shall prequalify for a Guaranteed Access Grant to be used at the time of enrollment in an institution of higher education by agreeing in writing, as a secondary and undergraduate student, to:

(i) Satisfy the attendance policy of the applicable school;

(ii) Refrain from substance abuse;

(iii) Provide information required by the Commission or the State Board of Education;

(iv) Apply for admission to an institution of higher education during the student's senior year of high school;

(v) Complete and file on a timely basis applications for federal student aid for each year that the student plans to enroll in postsecondary education;

(vi) Participate in the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program established in § 18–303.1 of this subtitle until the student graduates from high school and matriculates at an institution of higher education;

(vii) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent; and

(viii) Satisfy any other program requirements set by the Office, the Commission, the State Board of Education, or the State Department of Education.

(2) [For academic years 2017–2018 and 2018–2019, a] **A** student in grade 9 **OR GRADE 10** ~~who~~ [applies and qualifies for a Guaranteed Access Grant on the basis of financial need as established by the Commission] ~~IS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS~~ shall prequalify for a Guaranteed Access Grant to be used at the time of enrollment in an institution of higher education if the student:

(I) ~~otherwise~~ **OTHERWISE** meets the conditions of paragraph (1) of this subsection; **AND**

(II) 1. IS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICED MEALS;
OR

2. ATTENDS A SCHOOL THAT PARTICIPATES IN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION AND THE STUDENT IS IDENTIFIED BY:

A. DIRECT CERTIFICATION; OR

B. INCOME INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE FAMILY OF THE STUDENT TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM ON AN ALTERNATIVE FORM DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

18-303.1.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Fund” means the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program Fund.

(3) “Program” means the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program.

(e) In accordance with subsection (c) of this section, the services to be provided to students participating in the Program shall include:

(1) A high school graduation plan;

(2) Summer work or internship opportunities;

(3) Financial aid literacy assistance;

(4) Career interest assessments;

(5) Mentorship and one-on-one counseling;

(6) Visits to college campuses and workplaces;

(7) An intensive summer bridge **OR MATRICULATION ASSISTANCE** program for students entering an institution of higher education directly from high school; and

(8) A plan to matriculate and graduate from an institution of higher education.

(g) (1) [For fiscal year 2018, funding for the Program shall be \$5,000,000.

(2) For fiscal year 2019, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$4,700,000 for the Program.

(3) For fiscal years 2020 through 2023] **FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER**, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of ~~\$5,000,000~~ **\$2,500,000** **\$5,000,000** to the Program.

[(4)] (2) The Department shall distribute grants to nonprofit organizations that:

(i) Are selected in accordance with subsection (d) of this section; and

(ii) Will administer the Program in local school systems in which at least 50% of the students as a percentage of full-time equivalent students as defined in § 5–202 of this article are eligible to receive a free lunch under the National School Lunch Program in the 2015–2016 school year.

(j) On or before December 1, 2020, and **EACH** December 1 **[, 2022] THEREAFTER**, the Commission and the Department shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly, on the implementation of the Program, including:

(1) The number of students from each local school system who were prequalified for the Guaranteed Access Grant during each year of the Program;

(2) The race, disability status, and English language learner status of each participating student who prequalified for the Guaranteed Access Grant each year of the Program;

(3) The progress of each participating student through the Program, including high school graduation, institution of higher education matriculation and retention rates, and, if applicable, institution of higher education graduation rates;

(4) THE POTENTIAL FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR LONGITUDINAL DATA COLLECTION OF THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS MATRICULATING TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION EACH YEAR, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING RETENTION SERVICES EACH YEAR, AND POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES FOR THOSE TWO CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS;

[(4)] (5) The amount and quality of services provided by nonprofit organizations to participating students, including the use of college work–study students and high school students as mentors and counselors;

[(5)] (6) The nonprofit organizations that received grants under the Program, including any other entities that provided services such as institutions of higher education, the business community, and local schools or local school systems;

[(6)] (7) The amount of financial aid, in addition to the Guaranteed Access Grant, that participating students received each year that the students were enrolled in an institution of higher education; and

[(7)] (8) Findings and recommendations on the success of the Program and whether funding for the Program should be continued or expanded.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 30, 2021.