

CHAPTER 214

AN ACT concerning the NJ STARS and NJ STARS II Programs and amending P.L.2004, c.59 and P.L.2005, c.359.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 5 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-85) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:71B-85 NJ STARS scholarships; eligibility.

5. a. A scholarship under the NJ STARS Program shall cover the full cost of tuition and fees, subject to the prior application of other grants and scholarships against those costs as provided under paragraph (2) of subsection c. of this section, for up to 15 credit hours in any semester, for an eligible student enrolled in a full-time course of study at the New Jersey county college serving the student's county of residence. An otherwise eligible student who demonstrates to the authority, in accordance with such criteria and by means of such documentation as the authority shall establish by regulation, that the county college serving the student's county of residence does not offer the curriculum that the student chooses to study shall be eligible for such scholarship at another New Jersey county college offering that curriculum. The amount of any scholarship allowed hereunder to a student at a county college serving a county other than the student's county of residence shall be computed as though the student were a resident of the county served by that college, and the college shall likewise compute the amount of any additional payment, required with respect to the enrollment of that student for credit hours of study during a semester in which the scholarship is awarded that are not covered by that scholarship, as though the student were a resident of the county.

b. A student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the NJ STARS Program for up to five semesters. The scholarship shall be payable for the first year of enrollment in a county college to a student who graduated in the top 20% of the student's high school graduating class, provided that in the case of students graduating from high schools that do not calculate the class rank of their students, the student's ranking shall be determined by the high school in consultation with the authority. During a student's enrollment in a county college after the first year of enrollment, the scholarship shall be payable to that student if the student attains a grade point average of at least 3.0 by the start of the student's second year of county college enrollment. A student who attains a grade point average of less than 3.0 at the start of the second semester of the student's first year of county college enrollment shall participate in an enrichment program designed by the county college during the second semester of the student's first year of enrollment.

c. To be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS Program a student shall:

- (1) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the authority;
- (2) have applied for all other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be applied to tuition and fee charges to reduce the amount of any scholarship that the student shall receive under the provisions of this act;

- (3) be enrolled in a full-time course of study at a New Jersey county college;

- (4) have graduated from high school in 2004 or later, and not earlier than the calendar year two years prior to the first calendar year in which a scholarship payment is to be made; and

- (5) maintain continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on medical leave due to the illness of the student or a member of the student's immediate family or

emergency leave because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave shall have been approved by the county college, or unless called to partial or full mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons from a county college shall no longer be eligible for a scholarship under this act. If a student participating in the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all amounts received under the program. The county college shall be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

e. A student scholarship under the NJ STARS Program may be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the requirements pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

2. Section 4 of P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.4) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:71B-86.4 Eligibility for NJ STARS II; scholarship amounts.

4. a. For an eligible student enrolled in a full-time course of study at a New Jersey four-year public institution of higher education, a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program shall be paid to the institution in the amount of \$2,000 for each semester of enrollment commencing in the 2006-2007 academic year. For each academic year thereafter, the amount of the scholarship shall be increased by one-half of the average percentage increase over the prior academic year in undergraduate tuition and fees for all four-year public institutions of higher education and shall be paid to the institution for each semester of enrollment in that academic year; except that the amount of the scholarship shall not exceed \$2,500 per semester. The scholarship amount awarded shall be in addition to any other State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships to which the student is entitled. The four-year public institution of higher education shall waive or provide an institutional scholarship for any tuition and fee amount for the student, for up to 18 credits, that exceeds the sum of the NJ STARS II scholarship and any other State and federal grants and scholarships to which the student is entitled. The institution shall not be required to waive or provide an institutional scholarship for tuition and fees for credits in excess of 18 credit hours in any single semester.

b. A student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program for up to four semesters, excluding summer sessions, at a New Jersey four-year public institution of higher education.

c. A student shall be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program for the student's third academic year of study if the student: attained an associate's degree from a New Jersey county college; received a scholarship under the "New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program Act," P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.), or was eligible for but did not receive a scholarship under NJ STARS because the student's tuition and fees were fully covered by other State or federal need-based grants or merit scholarships, for each semester of study in the county college; attains a grade point average of at least 3.0 for the second academic year of study in the county college; enrolls in a baccalaureate degree program at a New Jersey four-year public institution of higher education for the third academic year of study in the academic year immediately following the student's attainment of an associate's degree; and meets the criteria set forth in subsection e. of this section. A grade for credits earned during a summer

semester shall for the purposes of this subsection be included in the calculation of the grade point average for the preceding academic year.

d. A student shall be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program for the student's fourth academic year of study if the student: received a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program for the student's third academic year of study pursuant to subsection c. of this section; based on the student's performance during the third academic year of study, attained a grade point average of at least 3.0; and meets the criteria set forth in subsection e. of this section. A grade for credits earned during a summer semester shall for the purposes of this subsection be included in the calculation of the grade point average for the preceding academic year.

e. To be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program, a student shall:

- (1) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the authority;
- (2) have applied for all other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be applied to tuition and fee charges;
- (3) be enrolled in a full-time course of study at a four-year public institution of higher education; and
- (4) maintain continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on medical leave due to the illness of the student or a member of the student's immediate family or emergency leave because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave shall have been approved by the four-year public institution of higher education, or unless called to partial or full mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

f. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons from a four-year public institution of higher education shall no longer be eligible for a scholarship under this act. If a student participating in the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all amounts received under the program. The four-year public institution of higher education shall be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

g. A student scholarship under the NJ STARS II Program may be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the requirements pursuant to this section.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved December 20, 2007.