

Meeting of the
OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
January 31, 2013

AGENDA ITEM #xx:

Policy

SUBJECT: Oklahoma's Promise – Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program Rule Revisions.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the State Regents approve permanent rule revisions for the Oklahoma's Promise – Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (Oklahoma's Promise).

BACKGROUND:

Oklahoma's Promise was created in 1992. Students must enroll in the program in the 8th, 9th, or 10th grade. The program requires students to complete a 17-unit core curriculum, achieve at least a 2.5 GPA in the core curriculum and a 2.5 GPA overall, attend school regularly, and refrain from drug abuse or delinquent acts. Students completing the requirements qualify for a scholarship equal to public college tuition. Participation is limited to students from families with an income of \$50,000 or less at the time of application to the program. Beginning with 2012 high school graduates, the student's family income must also not exceed \$100,000 at the time the student begins college.

POLICY ISSUES:

Oklahoma's Promise plays an important role in the efforts of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to increase the number of college graduates in Oklahoma. The program is designed as an incentive to encourage more students to aspire to college, prepare themselves for academic success in college, and to provide them with financial assistance for college expenses.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed rule changes address the following issues:

GPA Standards: The proposed amendments extend the numerical value of the program's minimum GPA requirements from one decimal point to two decimal points (e.g. from 2.5 to 2.50). In statute, the program GPA requirements are written out to the first decimal place. However, high school and college GPA's are near universally calculated out to the second decimal point. The change will provide clear guidance to students, parents and school officials about the minimum GPA cut-off points and will clarify that rounding of the student's GPA to the first decimal point will not be permitted.

Three-Year Period after High School to Begin Using the Award: The statutes creating the program state that, to begin using the program award after high school, an Oklahoma's Promise student must "have graduated within the previous three (3) years." The proposed change clarifies that the period is three *calendar* years. The change will help reduce any confusion about when the three-year period ends. For

example, an Oklahoma's Promise student graduating in 2012 would be required to begin college no later than the end of 2015.

The remaining non-substantive changes simply update references to the State Regents' Institutional Admission and Retention policy.

The proposed rule amendments were posted at the State Regents' meeting on October 25, 2012.

Attachment

SUBCHAPTER 23. OKLAHOMA HIGHER LEARNING ACCESS PROGRAM

610:25-23-1. Purpose (no changes)

610:25-23-2. Eligibility of participants (no changes)

610:25-23-3. Applications (no changes)

610:25-23-4. Program requirements

(a) Students shall agree to abide by the following provisions:

- (1) Attend school regularly and to do homework regularly;
- (2) Refrain from substance abuse;
- (3) Refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts;
- (4) Have school work and school records reviewed by mentors designated pursuant to the program;
- (5) Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education [OSRHE] or the State Board of Education; and
- (6) Participate in program activities. [70 O.S. § 2605]

(b) The student's parent(s), custodial parent(s), or guardian(s) shall witness the student's agreement and further agree to:

- (1) Assist the student in achieving compliance with the agreements;
- (2) Confer, when requested to do so, with the school contact person, other school personnel, and program mentors;
- (3) Provide information requested by the OSRHE or the State Board of Education; and
- (4) Assist the student in completing forms and reports required for program participation, making application to institutions and schools of higher learning, and filing applications for student grants and scholarships. [70 O.S. § 2605]

(c) Students in the program graduating high school in 2010 and thereafter must complete the following 17-unit core curriculum with a minimum 2.50 grade-point-average (GPA) on a 4.00 grading scale, by the time they graduate from high school. For the purpose of calculating the required core curriculum GPA, core courses in English, lab science, mathematics, history and citizenship skills, foreign or non-English language, computer technology, or "additional" subject areas must be transcribed with a letter grade that has a corresponding numerical value. If the school district assigns a course a grade of "pass" without a

numerical value, the OSRHE will assign a letter grade of "D" or the lowest passing grade that the high school assigns to courses. If the required one unit, year, or set of competencies in fine arts (music, art, or drama) or speech is fulfilled on a pass/fail or competency basis, the course(s) will be accepted and excluded from the required core curriculum GPA calculation.

- (1) Four units, or years, of English (grammar, composition, literature; should include an integrated writing component);
 - (2) Three units, or years, of lab science (biology, chemistry, physics, or any lab science certified by the school district; general science with or without a lab may not be used to meet this requirement);
 - (3) Three units, or years, of mathematics (Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, math analysis, pre-calculus [must have completed geometry and Algebra II], calculus, Advanced Placement Statistics);
 - (4) Three units, or years of history and citizenship skills (1 unit of American history and 2 units from the subjects of history, economics, geography, government and/or non-Western culture);
 - (5) Two units, or years, of a foreign or non-English language (both units, or years, of the same language), or Two units, or years, of computer technology (courses in programming, hardware, and business computer applications such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets and graphics will qualify; keyboarding and typing classes do not qualify);
 - (6) One additional unit, or year, of subjects listed above, or any Advanced Placement course except AP courses in applied fine arts (art history and music theory will count; studio art courses will not count);
 - (7) One unit, year, or set of competencies of fine arts (music, art, or drama) or speech.
- (d) The program curricular requirements for English, science, mathematics, history and citizenship skills are identical with the curricular requirements for college admission set by the OSRHE. Any change by the OSRHE to the curricular requirements for college admission shall also apply to the program curricular requirements.
- (e) Advanced students who complete core courses in earlier grades will not be required to take additional courses for purposes of the requirements of this program.
- (f) Strict parameters regulate the substitution of applied courses (~~OSRHE Policy Statement on Admission to, Retention in and Transfer Among Colleges and Universities of the State System policy on Institutional Admission and Retention~~).
- (g) Exceptions to the required core curriculum will be considered according to the following:
- (1) Students attending schools, or homeschool students participating in other educational programs, which do not offer all the core curriculum courses will be allowed to satisfy the requirements subject to the following provisions:
 - (A) Core curriculum requirements which are also required for regular college admission (OSRHE policy on Institutional Admission and Retention) will be subject to the OSRHE Policy on Remediation and Removal of High School Curricular Deficiencies.

(B) Any other core curriculum requirements must be satisfied during the first twenty-four (24) hours of college coursework. Any exceptions to the twenty-four (24) hour limitation must be requested in writing and shall be subject to approval by the Chancellor.

(2) Students who have documented proficiency in a non-English language equivalent to at least two (2) units of high school study may be exempted from the requirement of two (2) units of a foreign or non-English language.

(3) Any other requests for exceptions to the core curriculum requirement must be submitted in writing to the Chancellor. Upon approval of the exception, the student may be eligible for program benefits; provided, such approval may require the satisfaction of any core curriculum requirements omitted in high school or other educational program.

(h) Students must attain a minimum 2.50 cumulative GPA on a 4.00 grading scale for all work attempted in grades nine through twelve.

(i) Homeschool students and students graduating from a high school not accredited by the State Board of Education must achieve a composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test or the equivalent SAT test score. Only ACT and SAT test scores from tests administered on national test dates prior to the student's high school graduation will be considered.

610:25-23-5. Securing Program benefits

(a) To qualify for the program benefits for the first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment, the participant must:

(1) Be a resident of this state both at the time of application to the program and at the time the student graduates from high school, or have been enrolled in a school district located in this state that serves students who reside in both this state and an adjacent state pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-117.1 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

(2) Have graduated within the previous three (3) calendar years from a high school or other educational program if homeschooled. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) may award benefits for a student's first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment taken more than three (3) calendar years after the student graduates from high school, or other educational program if homeschooled, if the student is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the Reserve Corps of the Armed Forces of the United States, or the Oklahoma National Guard, and is ordered to active duty or active duty for special work or training and due to the duty commitment the student is unable to enroll prior to the end of the three-year period. Such three-year period shall be extended by the length of the term of duty.

(3) Have a record of satisfactory compliance with the agreements and program requirements described in 610:25-23-4. Students failing to comply with the agreement and program requirements shall not be eligible for awards. Compliance shall be verified by the local contact person upon a form provided by the OSRHE. Final verification of compliance shall be determined by the OSRHE. A copy of the student's final high school transcript shall be submitted by the local contact person with the student's verification form.

(4) Have satisfied admission standards as established by the OSRHE for first-time-entering students for the appropriate type of institution (~~OSRHE Policy Statement on Admission to, Retention in and Transfer Among Colleges and Universities of the State System~~ policy on Institutional Admission and Retention) or, if attending a private institution, satisfy the admission standards determined by the private institution; provided, that no student participating in the program shall be admitted into an institution of higher education by special admission standards.

(5) Have secured admission to, and enrolled in, an institution which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, a postsecondary program offered pursuant to a duly approved cooperative agreement between a public technology center and an institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, or a private institution of higher learning located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

(6) Be a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United States. This provision shall not apply to any student that was enrolled in the program prior to the end of 2006-07 school year.

(b) For students receiving the program benefit award for the first time in 2012-13 and thereafter, at the time the student begins postsecondary education and prior to receiving any program benefit award, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) shall not exceed \$100,000 per year. The determination of financial qualification as set forth in this paragraph shall be based on the income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if the student:

(1) is determined to be independent of the student's parents for federal financial aid purposes,

(2) was in the permanent custody of the Department of Human Services at the time the student enrolled in the program, or

(3) was in the court-ordered custody of a federally-recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, at the time the student enrolled in the program.

(c) A student who was adopted while in the permanent custody of the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, shall be subject to the following financial qualification at the time the student begins postsecondary education and prior to receiving any program benefit award:

(1) For a student adopted between birth and twelve (12) years of age, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) may not exceed \$150,000 per year.

(2) For a student adopted between thirteen (13) and seventeen (17) years of age, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) may not exceed \$200,000 per year.

(3) If the student is determined to be independent of the student's parents for federal financial aid purposes, the determination of financial qualification shall be based on the income of the student, not the income of the parent(s).

(d) Award recipients shall apply for financial aid at the institution in which they enroll.

(e) All students eligible to receive the program benefit award for the first time in 2012-13 and thereafter must complete an application for federal student financial aid (Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA) or its equivalent. Students not eligible to complete the FAFSA will be provided an alternate

method by the OSRHE. Income information submitted through the FAFSA, or an alternate method if necessary, shall be used to determine compliance with the income limits described in sections (b) and (c) above.

(f) Any person incarcerated in a state, federal, or private correctional facility shall not be eligible to receive program benefits.

610:25-23-6. Retaining eligibility in postsecondary education

(a) To retain eligibility for program benefits while pursuing a program of higher learning in an institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the student shall maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic progress according to standards of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE). Students attending an eligible private institution shall maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic progress according to the standards of the institution in which they are enrolled. [70 O.S. § 2603; OSRHE ~~Policy II-2-46.3~~ policy on Institutional Admission and Retention]

(b) Effective January 1, 2008, any student receiving the program benefit award that is expelled or suspended for more than one semester from an institution of higher education for conduct reasons shall permanently lose eligibility for program benefits.

(c) For students receiving the program benefit award for the first time in 2012-13 and thereafter, the student must achieve a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale or its equivalent for courses taken through the student's sophomore year and achieve a minimum grade point average of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale or its equivalent for courses taken during the student's junior year and thereafter.

(1) Any Oklahoma's Promise student with a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.00 upon the completion of sixty (60) earned semester credit hours, or its equivalent, shall permanently lose eligibility for program benefits. The cumulative grade point average at the end of the enrollment period during which the student completes their sixtieth (60th) earned semester credit hour, or its equivalent, shall be calculated by the institution in which the student is enrolled to determine compliance with this provision. The institution shall notify the OSRHE if the student fails to meet this requirement.

(2) To remain eligible for the award, an Oklahoma's Promise student must also achieve a 2.50 cumulative grade point average for courses taken after the completion of sixty (60) earned semester credit hours, or its equivalent. The first check of this grade point average requirement will be conducted by the institution in which the student is enrolled at the end of the enrollment period during which the student completes their ninetieth (90th) earned semester credit hour, or its equivalent. The grade point average calculation shall include all earned semester credit hours, or their equivalent, starting with the enrollment period immediately following the enrollment period during which the student completed their sixtieth (60th) earned semester credit hour, or its equivalent. Thereafter, the institution in which the student is enrolled shall check the cumulative grade point average for courses taken after the completion of sixty (60) earned semester credit hours, or its equivalent, at the end of each enrollment period. Any student whose cumulative grade point average at the required check points is below 2.50, shall be ineligible for program benefits until the cumulative grade point average for courses taken after the completion of sixty (60) earned semester credit hours or its equivalent is raised to 2.50 or above. Any period of

ineligibility for failure to meet the requirements of this provision shall count against the student's maximum time period of award eligibility.

(3) For institutions within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the student's grade point average shall be calculated using the methodology defined as "Cumulative Grade Point Average" in the OSRHE policy on grading.

(d) Beginning in 2012-13, all Oklahoma's Promise students receiving the award in college will be required to meet federal satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards as defined by the institution in which they are enrolled. This requirement is in addition to the statutory GPA requirement described in section (c) above and will apply to all Oklahoma's Promise award recipients whether or not they are receiving federal student financial aid. Any Oklahoma's Promise student that is ineligible to receive federal financial aid due to failure to meet SAP standards will also be ineligible to receive the Oklahoma's Promise award.

610:25-23-7. Payment of awards; policies and limitations (no changes)

610:25-23-8. Administrative responsibilities (no changes)

610:25-23-9. "Heroes Promise" (no changes)