

By: Senator(s) Jordan (18th)

To: Universities and
Colleges;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2053

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AND PROVIDE FOR AN EARLY HIGH SCHOOL
2 GRADUATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE BOARD OF
3 TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING; TO DEFINE
4 ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS FOR THE PROGRAM; TO
5 PROVIDE THAT AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT UNDER THE PROGRAM IS ENTITLED TO
6 \$1,000.00 IN STATE TUITION CREDITS AT A MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC OR
7 PRIVATE 4-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY; TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH TUITION
8 CREDITS UNDER THE PROGRAM ARE FINANCED UNDER THE MINIMUM EDUCATION
9 PROGRAM AND TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
10 CONSIDER THE COSTS OF THE TUITION CREDIT PROGRAM IN ESTIMATING THE
11 FUNDS NEEDED FOR THE MINIMUM EDUCATION PROGRAM; TO AUTHORIZE THE
12 BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO
13 ADOPT RULES TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

15
16 SECTION 1. (1) The student financial assistance program
17 authorized by this section is known as the Early High School
18 Graduation Scholarship program.

19 (2) The Early High School Graduation Scholarship program is
20 hereby created to increase efficiency in the Minimum Education
21 program, or its successor, and to provide tuition assistance to an
22 eligible person to enable that person to attend a Mississippi
23 public or private four-year college or university. A portion of
24 the savings to the Minimum Education program, or its successor,
25 that occur as a result of the Early High School Graduation
26 Scholarship program shall be dedicated to state tuition credits
27 provided by the program.

28 (3) To be eligible for the Early High School Graduation
29 Scholarship program, a person shall:

30 (a) Have the written approval of at least one (1) of
31 the person's parents or legal guardians;

32 (b) Have successfully completed the requirements for a

33 public high school diploma in not more than thirty-six (36)
34 consecutive months and graduated or be eligible for graduation
35 from a Mississippi public high school;

36 (c) Have attended high school in this state only; and

37 (d) Be a Mississippi resident as defined by rule of the
38 Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

39 (4) An eligible person under the Early High School
40 Graduation Scholarship program is entitled to One Thousand Dollars
41 (\$1,000.00) in state tuition credits at a Mississippi four-year
42 public or private college or university. The use of a credit at a
43 Mississippi private college or university is contingent on the
44 private college or university's agreement to match the state
45 tuition credit.

46 (5) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
47 Learning shall provide a certificate for state tuition credits to
48 an eligible person.

49 (6) On enrollment of an eligible person in an eligible
50 college or university, the college or university shall apply to
51 the person's tuition charges for the enrollment period an amount
52 equal to the lesser of:

53 (a) The amount of the tuition credit available to the
54 person; or

55 (b) The person's actual tuition.

56 A private college or university shall apply the state tuition
57 credit and the matching credit required by subsection (4) in equal
58 amounts.

59 (7) For each student using a state tuition credit under this
60 section, the college or university shall report to the Board of
61 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning:

62 (a) The student's name;

63 (b) The school district from which the student
64 graduated from high school; and

65 (c) The amount of the state tuition credit applied.

66 (8) On receipt of a report from an eligible college or
67 university under subsection (7), the Board of Trustees of State
68 Institutions of Higher Learning shall distribute to the college or
69 university the amount of the state tuition credit applied by the
70 college or university. At least once each year the Board of
71 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall submit a
72 report to the State Superintendent of Education that includes:

73 (a) The name of each student who used state tuition
74 credit under this section during the period covered by the report;

75 (b) The school district from which each student
76 graduated from high school; and

77 (c) The amount of the state tuition credit used by each
78 student during the period covered by the report.

79 On receipt of a report from the Board of Trustees of State
80 Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Superintendent of
81 Education shall transfer to the Board of Trustees of State
82 Institutions of Higher Learning, from funds appropriated for the
83 Minimum Education, or its successor, an amount sufficient to
84 reimburse the board of trustees for amounts disbursed in payment
85 of state tuition credits during the period covered by the report.

86 (9) The Early High School Graduation Scholarship program is
87 financed under the appropriation to the Minimum Education program
88 or its successor public school financing program. The State
89 Superintendent of Education shall reduce the total annual
90 allotment of Minimum Education program payments made to a school
91 district by an amount equal to the amount of state tuition credits
92 under this section applied by eligible colleges or universities on
93 behalf of eligible persons who graduated from the district that
94 has not been used to compute a previous reduction under this
95 section. The State Department of Education and the Legislative
96 Budget Office shall consider the costs of the program in
97 estimating the funds needed for Minimum Education program, or
98 successor funding program, purposes.

99 (10) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
100 Learning shall adopt rules to administer this section. The board
101 of trustees shall distribute copies of all rules adopted under
102 this section to each eligible college or university, and to each
103 school district.

104 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
105 and after July 1, 1999.