



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4453

Introduced 1/20/2026, by Rep. Sharon Chung

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 947/65.15

Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. Provides that beginning July 1, 2026, funds for the special education teacher scholarship program shall be continuously appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. Provides that this requirement constitutes an irrevocable and continuing appropriation of all amounts necessary for the purpose specified by the requirement to the fullest extent such appropriation is required. Effective July 1, 2026.

LRB104 17492 LNS 30918 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
5 amended by changing Section 65.15 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/65.15)

7 Sec. 65.15. Special education teacher scholarships.

8 (a) There shall be awarded annually 250 scholarships to
9 persons qualifying as members of any of the following groups:

10 (1) Students who are otherwise qualified to receive a
11 scholarship as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this
12 Section and who make application to the Commission for
13 such scholarship and agree to take courses that will
14 prepare the student for the teaching of children described
15 in Section 14-1 of the School Code.

16 (2) Persons holding a valid certificate issued under
17 the laws relating to the certification of teachers and who
18 make application to the Commission for such scholarship
19 and agree to take courses that will prepare them for the
20 teaching of children described in Section 14-1 of the
21 School Code.

22 (3) Persons who (A) have graduated high school; (B)
23 have not been certified as a teacher; and (C) make

1 application to the Commission for such scholarship and
2 agree to take courses that will prepare them for the
3 teaching of children described in Section 14-1 of the
4 School Code.

5 Scholarships awarded under this Section shall be issued
6 pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Commission;
7 provided that no rule or regulation promulgated by the State
8 Board of Education prior to the effective date of this
9 amendatory Act of 1993 pursuant to the exercise of any right,
10 power, duty, responsibility or matter of pending business
11 transferred from the State Board of Education to the
12 Commission under this Section shall be affected thereby, and
13 all such rules and regulations shall become the rules and
14 regulations of the Commission until modified or changed by the
15 Commission in accordance with law.

16 For the purposes of this Section scholarships awarded each
17 school year shall be deemed to be issued on July 1 of the year
18 prior to the start of the postsecondary school term and all
19 calculations for use of the scholarship shall be based on such
20 date. Each scholarship shall entitle its holder to exemption
21 from fees as provided in subsection (a) of Section 65.40 while
22 enrolled in a special education program of teacher education,
23 for a period of not more than 4 calendar years and shall be
24 available for use at any time during such period of study
25 except as provided in subsection (b) of Section 65.40.

26 Scholarships issued to holders of a valid certificate

1 issued under the laws relating to the certification of
2 teachers as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection may
3 also entitle the holder thereof to a program of teacher
4 education that will prepare the student for the teaching of
5 children described in Section 14-1 of the School Code at the
6 graduate level.

7 (b) The principal, or his or her designee, of an approved
8 high school shall certify to the Commission, for students who
9 are Illinois residents and are completing an application, that
10 the students ranked scholastically in the upper one-half of
11 their graduating class at the end of the sixth semester.

12 (c) Each holder of a scholarship must furnish proof to the
13 Commission, in such form and at such intervals as the
14 Commission prescribes, of the holder's continued enrollment in
15 a teacher education program qualifying the holder for the
16 scholarship. Any holder of a scholarship who fails to register
17 in a special education program of teacher education at the
18 university within 10 days after the commencement of the term,
19 quarter or semester immediately following the receipt of the
20 scholarship or who, having registered, withdraws from the
21 university or transfers out of teacher education, shall
22 thereupon forfeit the right to use it and it may be granted to
23 the person having the next highest rank as shown on the list
24 held by the Commission. If the person having the next highest
25 rank, within 10 days after notification thereof by the
26 Commission, fails to register at any such university in a

1 special education program of teacher education, or who, having
2 registered, withdraws from the university or transfers out of
3 teacher education, the scholarship may then be granted to the
4 person shown on the list as having the rank next below such
5 person.

6 (d) Any person who has accepted a scholarship under the
7 preceding subsections of this Section must, within one year
8 after graduation from or termination of enrollment in a
9 teacher education program, begin teaching at a nonprofit
10 Illinois public, private, or parochial preschool or elementary
11 or secondary school for a period of at least 2 of the 5 years
12 immediately following that graduation or termination,
13 excluding, however, from the computation of that 5 year period
14 (i) any time up to 3 years spent in the military service,
15 whether such service occurs before or after the person
16 graduates; (ii) any time that person is enrolled full-time in
17 an academic program related to the field of teaching leading
18 to a graduate or postgraduate degree; (iii) the time that
19 person is a person with a temporary total disability for a
20 period of time not to exceed 3 years, as established by the
21 sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (iv) the time that
22 person is seeking and unable to find full time employment as a
23 teacher at an Illinois public, private, or parochial school;
24 (v) the time that person is taking additional courses, on at
25 least a half-time basis, needed to obtain certification as a
26 teacher in Illinois; or (vi) the time that person is

1 fulfilling teaching requirements associated with other
2 programs administered by the Commission if he or she cannot
3 concurrently fulfill them under this Section in a period of
4 time equal to the length of the teaching obligation.

5 A person who has accepted a scholarship under the
6 preceding subsections of this Section and who has been unable
7 to fulfill the teaching requirements of this Section may
8 receive a deferment from the obligation of repayment under
9 this subsection (d) under guidelines established by the
10 Commission; provided that no guideline established for any
11 such purpose by the State Board of Education prior to the
12 effective date of this amendatory Act of 1993 shall be
13 affected by the transfer to the Commission of the
14 responsibility for administering and implementing the
15 provisions of this Section, and all guidelines so established
16 shall become the guidelines of the Commission until modified
17 or changed by the Commission.

18 Any such person who fails to fulfill this teaching
19 requirement shall pay to the Commission the amount of tuition
20 waived by virtue of his or her acceptance of the scholarship,
21 together with interest at 5% per year on that amount. However,
22 this obligation to repay the amount of tuition waived plus
23 interest does not apply when the failure to fulfill the
24 teaching requirement results from the death or adjudication as
25 a person under legal disability of the person holding the
26 scholarship, and no claim for repayment may be filed against

1 the estate of such a decedent or person under legal
2 disability. If a recipient who enters into repayment under
3 this paragraph subsequently, within 5 years of entering
4 repayment, begins to teach at a school meeting the description
5 under this subsection (d), the Commission may reduce the
6 amount owed by the recipient in proportion to the amount of the
7 teaching obligation completed. Payments received by the
8 Commission under this subsection (d) shall be remitted to the
9 State Treasurer for deposit in the General Revenue Fund. Each
10 person receiving a scholarship shall be provided with a
11 description of the provisions of this subsection (d) at the
12 time he or she qualifies for the benefits of such a
13 scholarship.

14 (e) This Section is basically the same as Sections 30-1,
15 30-2, 30-3, and 30-4a of the School Code, which are repealed by
16 this amendatory Act of 1993, and shall be construed as a
17 continuation of the teacher scholarship program established by
18 that prior law, and not as a new or different teacher
19 scholarship program. The State Board of Education shall
20 transfer to the Commission, as the successor to the State
21 Board of Education for all purposes of administering and
22 implementing the provisions of this Section, all books,
23 accounts, records, papers, documents, contracts, agreements,
24 and pending business in any way relating to the teacher
25 scholarship program continued under this Section; and all
26 scholarships at any time awarded under that program by, and

1 all applications for any such scholarships at any time made
2 to, the State Board of Education shall be unaffected by the
3 transfer to the Commission of all responsibility for the
4 administration and implementation of the teacher scholarship
5 program continued under this Section. The State Board of
6 Education shall furnish to the Commission such other
7 information as the Commission may request to assist it in
8 administering this Section.

9 (f) Beginning July 1, 2026, funds for the scholarship
10 program established under this Section shall be continuously
11 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Illinois
12 Student Assistance Commission. This subsection (f) constitutes
13 an irrevocable and continuing appropriation of all amounts
14 necessary for the purpose specified in this subsection (f) to
15 the fullest extent such appropriation is required.

16 (Source: P.A. 103-448, eff. 8-4-23.)

17 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
18 2026.