

HB4631



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4631

Introduced 2/3/2026, by Rep. Dan Swanson

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 947/65.15

Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. With respect to special education teacher scholarships, provides that up to 50 additional scholarships may be awarded each year to persons who qualify, subject to appropriation to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission for this purpose.

LRB104 18387 LNS 31829 b

A BILL FOR

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 Subject to appropriation to the Commission for this
6 purpose, up to 50 additional scholarships may be awarded each
7 year to persons who qualify under this subsection (a).

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

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

1 available for use at any time during such period of study
2 except as provided in subsection (b) of Section 65.40.

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

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

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

1 held by the Commission. If the person having the next highest
2 rank, within 10 days after notification thereof by the
3 Commission, fails to register at any such university in a
4 special education program of teacher education, or who, having
5 registered, withdraws from the university or transfers out of
6 teacher education, the scholarship may then be granted to the
7 person shown on the list as having the rank next below such
8 person.

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

1 (v) the time that person is taking additional courses, on at
2 least a half-time basis, needed to obtain certification as a
3 teacher in Illinois; or (vi) the time that person is
4 fulfilling teaching requirements associated with other
5 programs administered by the Commission if he or she cannot
6 concurrently fulfill them under this Section in a period of
7 time equal to the length of the teaching obligation.

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

21 Any such person who fails to fulfill this teaching
22 requirement shall pay to the Commission the amount of tuition
23 waived by virtue of his or her acceptance of the scholarship,
24 together with interest at 5% per year on that amount. However,
25 this obligation to repay the amount of tuition waived plus
26 interest does not apply when the failure to fulfill the

1 teaching requirement results from the death or adjudication as
2 a person under legal disability of the person holding the
3 scholarship, and no claim for repayment may be filed against
4 the estate of such a decedent or person under legal
5 disability. If a recipient who enters into repayment under
6 this paragraph subsequently, within 5 years of entering
7 repayment, begins to teach at a school meeting the description
8 under this subsection (d), the Commission may reduce the
9 amount owed by the recipient in proportion to the amount of the
10 teaching obligation completed. Payments received by the
11 Commission under this subsection (d) shall be remitted to the
12 State Treasurer for deposit in the General Revenue Fund. Each
13 person receiving a scholarship shall be provided with a
14 description of the provisions of this subsection (d) at the
15 time he or she qualifies for the benefits of such a
16 scholarship.

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

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

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