Senate Bill 497

Sponsored by Senator GELSER; Senator HASS (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced.**

Lowers high school grade point average required to participate in Oregon Promise program from 2.5 to 2.0.

Permits recipient of program grant to be enrolled in courses for less than half-time if recipient can demonstrate that recipient has paid employment that averages 30 or more hours per week.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to Oregon Promise eligibility; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 341.522.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 341.522 is amended to read:

341.522. (1) The Office of Student Access and Completion shall administer the Oregon Promise program as provided by this section.

(2) Subject to subsections (7) to (10) of this section, the office shall provide a grant for community college courses to a person who meets the criteria described in subsections (3) to (6) of this section. The grant shall be limited as provided by subsections (7) to (10) of this section.

(3) A grant shall be awarded under this section to a person who meets the following criteria:

(a) Is enrolled in courses that are:

(A) Offered at a community college in this state; and

(B) Determined by the office, in accordance with rules adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, to be required for completion of:

(i) A one-year curriculum for students who plan to transfer to another post-secondary institution of education;

(ii) An associate degree; or

(iii) A program in career and technical education;

(b) Has been a resident of this state for at least 12 months prior to enrolling in the courses described in paragraph (a) of this subsection;

(c) Attained the person's highest level of education in this state prior to:

(A) Receiving a diploma under ORS 329.451;

(B) Receiving a certificate for passing an approved high school equivalency test such as the General Educational Development (GED) test as provided by ORS 350.175;

(C) Completing grade 12 in compliance with the requirements of ORS 339.035; or

(D) Completing grade 12 at a private or parochial school, as described in ORS 339.030 (1)(a);

(d) Except as provided in subsections (4) and (5) of this section, attained the person's highest level of education as described in paragraph (c) of this subsection within six months from the date that the person first enrolls in courses described in paragraph (a) of this subsection for the purpose of receiving a grant under this section;

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

(e) Earned a cumulative grade point average of [*2.5*] **2.0** or better in high school or otherwise demonstrated an equivalent academic ability, as determined by the office according to rules adopted by the commission;

(f) Completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for each academic year and accepted all state and federal aid grants available to the person, if eligible to file the application; and

(g) Has not completed either of the following:

(A) More than a total of 90 credit hours, or the equivalent, at a post-secondary institution of education; or

(B) A curriculum, degree or program, as described in paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection.

(4)(a) If a person otherwise meets the required criteria and has been awarded a grant under subsection (3) of this section, but the person enters into service with a career and technical student organization relating to agriculture or farming that is approved by the Department of Education under ORS 344.077 within six months after the person attained the person's highest level of education as described in subsection (3)(c) of this section, the person will continue to be eligible to receive the grant if the person first enrolls in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section within six months of finishing the person's service with the career and technical student organization.

(b) In addition to the situation described in paragraph (a) of this subsection, the commission may waive the requirement set forth in subsection (3)(d) of this section for a person who shows that the person was unable to timely enroll in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section due to a significant hardship. The commission may adopt rules to implement this paragraph.

(5) A member of the Oregon National Guard who has completed initial active duty training is not required to comply with the criteria set forth in subsection (3)(d) of this section in order to receive a grant, provided that the member first enrolls in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section within six months after completing initial active duty training, as evidenced by an official form issued by the United States Department of Defense.

(6)(a) A person continues to remain eligible to receive a grant under this section if the person, in addition to satisfying the criteria specified in subsection (3) of this section, meets the following criteria:

(A) Maintains at least the minimum cumulative grade point average prescribed by the commission based on federal aid grant requirements;

(B) Makes satisfactory academic progress toward a curriculum, degree or program, as described in subsection (3)(a)(B) of this section, as prescribed by the commission based on federal aid grant requirements;

(C)**(i)** Enrolls in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section for a sufficient number of credit hours to be considered at least a half-time student each term for at least three terms in each consecutive academic year; **or**

(ii) Enrolls in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section for a number of credit hours less than that required under sub-subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph, but who provides documentation to the commission demonstrating that the person has paid employment that averages 30 or more hours per week; and

(D) Completes a first-year experience, as identified by the community college and reported by the community college to the commission.

(b) A person who fails to meet an eligibility requirement described in paragraph (a) of this subsection becomes ineligible to receive a grant under this section for the term after which the

person fails to meet the eligibility requirement, unless the eligibility requirement is waived by the office according to rules adopted by the commission.

(7)(a) The total amount of a grant awarded under this section shall be based on each term that a person is enrolled in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section. Except as provided in subsections (9) and (10) of this section, after the amount of tuition for the person for the term is reduced by any amounts received by the person in state and federal aid grants, the person shall be eligible for a grant under this section in an amount that equals:

(A) Except as provided by paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subsection, not less than the greater of:

(i) $1,000; and

(ii) The person's actual cost for tuition.

(B) Not more than the lesser of:

(i) The average cost of tuition at a community college in this state, as determined by the office; and

(ii) The person's actual cost for tuition.

(b) The amount of a grant, as calculated under paragraph (a) of this subsection, shall be reduced by $50 for each term that the person receives a grant under this section.

(c) The minimum amount of a grant, as calculated under paragraph (a) of this subsection, may be prorated for a person who is enrolled in courses described in subsection (3)(a) of this section for a sufficient number of credit hours to be considered at least a half-time student but not a full-time student.

(d) The commission may prescribe by rule whether to include fees, and any limitations related to the inclusion of fees, when determining the actual cost of tuition or the average cost of tuition under this subsection.

(8) The commission may adopt by rule the priority by which grants are awarded, which may allow for preference to be given to persons enrolled in school districts or high schools that meet specified criteria.

(9) Prior to the start of the fall term of each academic year, the commission shall determine whether there are sufficient moneys to award a grant under this section to each person who meets the criteria described in subsections (3) to (6) of this section. On the basis of this determination the commission may:

(a) Limit eligibility to receive a grant under this section to a person whose family contribution, as determined by the commission by rule, is at or below the level the commission determines is necessary to allow the commission to operate the Oregon Promise program with available moneys; or

(b) Reduce or eliminate any limitation on eligibility previously imposed by the commission under paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(10)(a) If at any time the commission determines that there are insufficient moneys to provide a grant to each person who has been awarded a grant under this section, the commission may:

(A) Decrease the total amount of the grant awarded; or

(B) Increase the amount that a person must pay under subsection (7)(b) of this section for each term that the person receives a grant under this section.

(b) If at any time the commission determines that the amount of moneys available to operate the Oregon Promise program exceeds the amount determined under subsection (9) of this section, the commission may reduce or eliminate any limitation on eligibility to receive a grant under this sec-

tion that was previously imposed by the commission under subsection (9)(a) of this section.

(c) The commission shall promptly notify the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly responsible for higher education each time the commission takes any action under paragraph (a) or (b) of this subsection.

(11) The commission shall adopt any rules necessary for the administration of this section, including any requirements related to:

(a) Specifying the form and timelines for submitting an application for a grant under this section;

(b) Determining whether a person is eligible for a grant under this section, including whether the person shall be given priority as allowed under subsection (8) of this section;

(c) Implementing programs or policies that improve the academic success or completion rates for persons who receive a grant under this section;

(d) Prescribing eligibility requirements and grant calculations for persons dually enrolled in a community college and a public university; and

(e) Evaluating the impact of the program established under this section, including any requirements for reporting data needed for evaluations.

(12) No later than December 31 of each even-numbered year, the commission shall submit to an interim legislative committee related to education a report that summarizes the commission's findings on the impact of the program established under this section. The report shall include:

(a) Student completion rates of curricula, degrees and programs described in subsection (3)(a)(B) of this section;

(b) The amount of federal aid grants received by persons who received a grant under this section;

(c) The financial impact of the program on school districts that had students receive a grant under this section;

(d) The financial impact and the enrollment impact of the program on community colleges and public universities in this state; and

(e) The overall success rate of the program and financial impact of the program.

SECTION 2. The amendments to ORS 341.522 by section 1 of this 2019 Act apply to students applying for an Oregon Promise program grant on or after the effective date of this 2019 Act.