

Vocational Education Scholarship, Negotiated Contracts at State Universities, Private and Out-of-State Postsecondary Fees, Remedial Education, and Qualified Admissions; HB 2435

HB 2435 amends the Vocational Education Scholarship statutes, deals with state universities and negotiated contracts, extends a sunset on private and out-of-state postsecondary fees, changes requirements related to remedial education and the qualified admissions standards at state education institutions, and authorizes individual plans for success for students admitted under the minimum admissions standards.

Vocational Education Scholarship

The bill replaces the existing Vocational Education Scholarship with the new Career Technical Workforce Grant. The grant is available for students at or accepted into a designated career technical education program at the postsecondary level as designated by the Kansas Board of Regents. The Kansas Board of Regents, within the limits of appropriations, could award grants to those applicants who exhibit financial need. Under the bill, a grant for a full-time student will be up to \$1,000 per year, but could not exceed the cost of tuition and fees.

The Kansas Board of Regents will administer the grant using guidelines detailed in the bill. The Career Technical Workforce Grant will be evaluated by the Kansas Board of Regents each year and a report will be provided to the Governor and the Legislature. The bill allows the Kansas Board of Regents to adopt rules and regulations to carry out its duties.

If a student were to discontinue attendance, the refunded tuition and fees will go to the Career Technical Workforce Grant Discontinued Attendance Fund to be used for future grants. This also would be true for the state's share of any federal funding involved.

State Universities and Negotiated Contracts

The bill allows a state university employee to provide factual information, advice, or recommendations related to the negotiated terms of a technology licensing agreement or other research or development agreement between the university and a company in which the employee has a substantial interest, with two exceptions: employees who have the authority to negotiate or to approve the agreement on behalf of the university will not be allowed to provide factual information, advice, or recommendations; and any employee acting as a state university employee and who would receive a direct financial benefit will be limited to providing factual information in relation to the negotiated terms of an agreement.

The bill will become part of the governmental ethics laws.

Private and Out-of-State Postsecondary Fees

The bill extends the authority until June 30, 2017, for the Kansas Board of Regents to fix, charge, and collect fees for Kansas private and out-of-state postsecondary institutions operating in Kansas. Without passage of this bill, this authority would have expired on June 30, 2012.

Remedial Education, Qualified Admissions Standards, and Individual Plans for Success

The bill prohibits State General Fund dollars from being used for remedial courses at state universities effective August 15, 2015, but does not prohibit the courses from being provided with funding from other sources. Exceptions to this provision include a student who is in military service, is 21 years of age or older, or is an international student enrolled in a remedial English as a second language course. (State General Fund moneys could be used for remedial courses offered to those in the exception categories.)

Also, the bill allows the development of individual student plans for success by each state educational institution admitting a student under the 10.0 percent exception to the minimum admissions standards. In academic years 2012–13 and 2013–14, development of the plans is voluntary. In academic year 2014–15, individual plans for success become a requirement, prior to enrollment, of students admitted under the 10.0 percent exception window. An individual plan for success will be reviewed by the student and the student's advisor at least once during the 12-month period immediately preceding the initial adoption of the plan. The plan can be revised upon mutual agreement of the student and the student's advisor.

An individual plan for success will be a written statement jointly developed by the student, student's advisor, and any other employee designated by the state educational institution for the purpose of developing the plan. The plan can address a student's extracurricular activities, financial needs, and any other aspect of student life having a bearing on a student's academic success.

The bill requires the Kansas Board of Regents to conduct a study regarding the retention and graduation rates of students who are accepted into state universities through the exception to the minimum admissions standards. The Kansas Board of Regents is required to report the study's findings to the Senate and House Committees on Education by January 13, 2014.