

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1338

Introduced by Walz, 15.

Read first time January 17, 2024

Committee: Education

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to education; to adopt the Good Life Promise

2 Act.

3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Sections 1 to 10 of this act shall be known and may be
2 cited as the Good Life Promise Act.

3 Sec. 2. The purpose of the Good Life Promise Act is to:

4 (1) Reduce the number of students who withdraw from high school
5 before graduation;

6 (2) Decrease drug and alcohol abuse by encouraging postsecondary
7 educational pursuits;

8 (3) Increase the number of students entering postsecondary
9 educational institutions in Nebraska;

10 (4) Increase the number of students who are prepared to enter the
11 workforce upon graduation; and

12 (5) Support the attainment goal set by LR335 in 2022.

13 Sec. 3. For purposes of the Good Life Promise Act:

14 (1) Commission means the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary
15 Education;

16 (2) Department means the State Department of Education;

17 (3) Eligible educational expenses means tuition and mandatory fees
18 at a postsecondary educational institution;

19 (4) Eligible postsecondary educational institution means a public or
20 private postsecondary educational institution that is:

21 (a) Accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the
22 United States Department of Education;

23 (b) Offering a program of postsecondary education leading to a
24 baccalaureate degree or associate degree;

25 (c) Located in Nebraska; and

26 (d) Approved by the commission;

27 (5) Eligible student means a student who meets the requirements of
28 section 4 of this act to qualify for the program;

29 (6) Full-time means taking at least thirty credit hours or the
30 equivalent per academic year;

31 (7) Program means the Good Life Promise program established pursuant

1 to the Good Life Promise Act;

2 (8) Scholarship means a scholarship issued to an eligible student
3 pursuant to the Good Life Promise Act;

4 (9) Scholarship applicant means an eligible student who participated
5 in the Good Life Promise program and applies for a scholarship pursuant
6 to the Good Life Promise Act; and

7 (10) Scholarship recipient means a scholarship applicant who
8 receives a scholarship under the Good Life Promise Act.

9 Sec. 4. (1) The Good Life Promise program is created. The
10 commission shall administer the program. A student who successfully
11 participates in the program shall qualify to apply for a scholarship
12 under section 5 of this act for educational expenses at an eligible
13 postsecondary educational institution.

14 (2) To be eligible for the program, a student shall:

15 (a) Be a resident of Nebraska;

16 (b) Be enrolled in seventh or eighth grade at a school in Nebraska;

17 (c) Either:

18 (i) Qualify for free or reduced-price lunch under the United States
19 Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs; or

20 (ii) Be placed by a court order, by a child placing agency, or with
21 the consent of the Department of Health and Human Services in or with a:

22 (A) Foster family home as defined in section 71-1901;

23 (B) Home of a relative or other unlicensed caretaker; or

24 (C) Residential child-caring agency licensed under the Children's
25 Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act; and

26 (d) Agree in writing to:

27 (i) Graduate from an approved or accredited public, private,
28 denominational, or parochial high school in Nebraska or a school that
29 elects not to meet approval and accreditation requirements pursuant to
30 section 79-1601 with a cumulative grade point average of at least two and
31 one-half on a four-point scale or its equivalent;

1 (ii) Not illegally use any controlled substances as described in
2 section 28-405; and

3 (iii) Not drive under the influence pursuant to section 60-6,196 or
4 60-6,211.01.

5 (3) The commission shall, in consultation with the department,
6 identify students eligible to participate in the program and notify such
7 students of the program and the procedure to apply. The department shall
8 place information about the program on the department's website and
9 encourage schools to make students aware of the program and the procedure
10 for application.

11 (4) The commission shall work with the department and eligible
12 educational institutions to develop specific mentoring programs and
13 college and university visitation opportunities for eligible students in
14 the program and scholarship recipients.

15 Sec. 5. (1) An eligible student who participated in the program may
16 apply to the commission, on forms and in a manner prescribed by the
17 commission, for a scholarship to an eligible postsecondary educational
18 institution.

19 (2) The commission shall, subject to section 6 of this act, grant a
20 scholarship to a scholarship applicant for eligible educational expenses
21 at an eligible postsecondary educational institution if such applicant:

22 (a) Has applied to and been accepted into an eligible postsecondary
23 educational institution and intends to enroll;

24 (b) Certifies in writing that the applicant complied with the
25 agreement required by the program pursuant to subdivision (2)(d) of
26 section 4 of this act;

27 (c) Has filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and

28 (d) Agrees in writing to comply with the requirements of subsection
29 (3) of this section if awarded a scholarship pursuant to the Good Life
30 Promise Act.

31 (3) A scholarship recipient shall, during the first and third

1 academic year at the eligible postsecondary educational institution, meet
2 with at least one employer or labor organization approved by the
3 commission for at least thirty minutes to discuss current and future
4 career opportunities and the necessary education levels required for such
5 careers. Such meeting shall occur at a time and place convenient for the
6 scholarship recipient. If no approved employer or labor organization is
7 willing to meet with a scholarship recipient under this subsection, the
8 commission may waive the meeting requirement.

9 (4)(a) A scholarship recipient may receive a scholarship for up to
10 four consecutive years if such scholarship recipient submits a renewal
11 application for each academic year following receipt of the initial
12 scholarship on a form and in a manner prescribed by the commission. In
13 order to be eligible for scholarship renewal, a scholarship recipient
14 shall:

15 (i) Continue to be enrolled as a full-time student and in good
16 standing at such eligible postsecondary educational institution; and

17 (ii) At the time of the renewal, remain in a financial situation
18 that a lack of a scholarship would deter the completion of the
19 scholarship recipient's education as determined by the commission.

20 (b) The commission may allow a scholarship recipient who is
21 otherwise ineligible for a scholarship renewal pursuant to this
22 subsection to maintain eligibility for a scholarship if the student
23 submits a petition to the commission and the commission determines that
24 extenuating circumstances prevented the scholarship recipient from
25 meeting such requirements.

26 Sec. 6. (1) Subject to available funding, the commission may award
27 a scholarship to a scholarship recipient based on the following formula:

28 (a) For a scholarship recipient enrolled in a public eligible
29 postsecondary educational institution, the amount of the educational
30 expenses of such recipient, minus any state or federal financial
31 assistance awarded to such recipient; or

1 (b) For a scholarship recipient enrolled in a private eligible
2 postsecondary educational institution, the eligible educational expenses
3 of such recipient, up to the student costs for tuition and mandatory fees
4 for a full-time resident, undergraduate student for the last completed
5 year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, minus any state or federal
6 assistance awarded to such recipient.

7 (2) The total of all scholarships awarded pursuant to the Good Life
8 Promise Act in any fiscal year shall not exceed the amount available for
9 distribution under the act. If the total amount to be distributed in any
10 fiscal year exceeds the amount available for distribution, the amount to
11 be distributed to each scholarship recipient shall be proportionally
12 reduced so that the total reductions equal the amount of the excess based
13 on the financial need of each scholarship applicant.

14 Sec. 7. The commission shall establish a reasonable and fair appeal
15 procedure for students adversely affected by the actions of the
16 commission or an eligible postsecondary educational institution in the
17 distribution or termination of scholarships pursuant to the Good Life
18 Promise Act.

19 Sec. 8. The Good Life Promise Support Fund is created. The fund
20 shall be administered by the commission and consist of money transferred
21 by the Legislature and any gifts, grants, or bequests. The fund shall be
22 used to provide scholarships and carry out the Good Life Promise Act,
23 including any administrative costs. Any money in the fund available for
24 investment shall be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to
25 the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds
26 Investment Act. Any interest earned on the money in the fund shall accrue
27 to the fund.

28 Sec. 9. The commission may adopt and promulgate rules and
29 regulations to carry out the Good Life Promise Act.

30 Sec. 10. It is the intent of the Legislature to transfer twenty
31 million dollars from the General Fund to the Good Life Promise Support

1 Fund for FY2024-25 and each fiscal year thereafter to carry out the Good
2 Life Promise Act. It is the intent of the Legislature that if any fiscal
3 year the amount available in the Good Life Promise Support Fund is not
4 sufficient to cover the full cost of awarding all scholarships pursuant
5 to the Good Life Promise Act, additional funds be transferred from the
6 General Fund to the Good Life Promise Support Fund to carry out and
7 support the full cost of the Good Life Promise Act.