**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**A156, R178, S125**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Hembree, Turner, Young, Setzler, Fanning and Climer

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Introduced in the Senate on January 10, 2023

Introduced in the House on March 7, 2023

Last Amended on May 8, 2024

Currently residing in the Senate

Governor's Action: May 20, 2024, Signed

Summary: Scholarship Stipend

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 11/30/2022 Senate Prefiled

 11/30/2022 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education**

 1/10/2023 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 69)

 1/10/2023 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal‑page 69)

 2/8/2023 Scrivener's error corrected

 2/22/2023 Senate Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education** (Senate Journal‑page 8)

 2/27/2023 Scrivener's error corrected

 2/28/2023 Senate Read second time (Senate Journal‑page 19)

 3/1/2023 Senate Committee Amendment Adopted (Senate Journal‑page 8)

 3/1/2023 Senate Read third time and sent to House (Senate Journal‑page 8)

 3/1/2023 Senate Roll call Ayes-38 Nays-0 (Senate Journal‑page 8)

 3/7/2023 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 14)

 3/7/2023 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 14)

 5/1/2024 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works**

 5/7/2024 House Requests for debate-Rep(s). Erickson, Hixon, Carter, O'Neal, Sessions, MM Smith, BL Cox, Guffey, West, Robbins, Calhoon, Bustos, Long (House Journal‑page 131)

 5/8/2024 House Amended (House Journal‑page 264)

 5/8/2024 House Read second time (House Journal‑page 264)

 5/8/2024 House Roll call Yeas-110 Nays-0 (House Journal‑page 268)

 5/9/2024 House Read third time and returned to Senate with amendments (House Journal‑page 86)

 5/9/2024 Scrivener's error corrected

 5/9/2024 Senate Concurred in House amendment and enrolled (Senate Journal‑page 11)

 5/15/2024 Ratified R 178

 5/20/2024 Signed By Governor

 5/29/2024 Effective date 07/01/24

 5/29/2024 Act No. 156

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/02/2022](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20221202.docx)

[02/08/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20230208.docx)

[02/22/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20230222.docx)

[02/27/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20230227.docx)

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[03/01/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20230301.docx)

[05/01/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20240501.docx)

[05/08/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20240508.docx)

[05/09/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/125_20240509.docx)

(A156, R178, S125)

AN ACT to amend the south carolina code of laws by amending section 59‑149‑15, relating to additional life scholarship stipends for science and mathematics majors, so as to extend stipend availability to education majors, to define education majors and redefine science and mathematics majors to make conforming changes and other revisions, to provide education major stipend recipients must contractually agree to teach in South Carolina public schools for certain periods of time, and to provide grandfather provisions for certain existing stipend recipients, among other things; by amending section 59‑104‑25, relating to additional palmetto fellows scholarship stipends for science and mathematics majors, so as to extend stipend availability to education majors, to define education majors and redefine science and mathematics majors to make conforming changes and other revisions, to provide education major stipend recipients must contractually agree to teach in South Carolina public schools for certain periods of time, and to provide grandfather provisions for certain existing stipend recipients, among other things; by amending section 59-149-50, relating to LIFE Scholarship eligibility, so as to include the ACT test as an option for eligibility, to provide the commission on higher education shall determine the minimum qualifying ACT score, to provide this minimum qualifying score must be the equivalent of the minimum qualifying SAT score, to provide the commission periodically shall adjust these minimum qualifying scores commensurate with scoring scale adjustments made by the testing provider, and to provide college and universities must consider the minimum scoring requirement in effect at the time a test is taken when determining whether an individual satisfies the minimum scoring requirement; AND by amending section 59-104-20, relating to the duration of palmetto fellows scholarships, so as to provide students who use Palmetto Fellows Scholarships to attend eligible two-year institutions of higher learning shall receive a maximum of four continuous semesters and may continue to use scholarships to attend an eligible four-year institution, subject to the maximum number of semesters of eligibility for the scholarship.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

LIFE Scholarship stipend recipients, education majors added

SECTION 1. Section 59‑149‑15(A) and (B) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) A resident student who is at least a sophomore attending a four‑year public or private institution of higher learning in this State, who is majoring in education, science, or mathematics as defined below, and who is receiving a LIFE Scholarship for the current year, shall receive an additional LIFE Scholarship stipend equal to the cost of attendance after applying all other scholarships or grants, not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars each year for no more than three additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in a four‑year degree program, or for not more than four additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in a five‑year degree program or a 3 plus 2 program. In addition, during his freshman year, the student majoring in science or mathematics must have successfully completed a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics courses, or life and physical science courses, or a combination of both. A year is defined as thirty credit hours of instruction or its equivalent each year. To receive the additional LIFE Scholarship stipend each year, the student must receive the underlying LIFE Scholarship for that year and must be making acceptable progress each year toward receiving a degree in his education, science, or mathematics major. For purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses during a student’s freshman year, advanced placement courses in mathematics and life and physical sciences taken in high school on which the student scored high enough on the advanced placement test to receive credit at his institution and for which he received credit, count toward the fulfillment of this minimum requirement.

 (B) The Commission on Higher Education by regulation shall define what constitutes a science or mathematics major, applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year to persons who did not receive a LIFE Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year. This definition of a science or mathematics major must include, at a minimum, majors in science or mathematics disciplines, computer science or informational technology, engineering, accounting, and health care and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry; provided, that nothing herein prevents a student from changing majors within acceptable science or mathematics disciplines.

 (C) The Commission on Higher Education shall by regulation define what constitutes an education major for purposes of this section, applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year to persons who did not receive a LIFE Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year. This definition of an education major must include, in addition to other subjects considered appropriate by the commission, (1) mathematics education majors, (2) science education majors, and (3) students who major in mathematics, science, or another subject and obtain teacher certification in a subject area related to their major prior to completion of their undergraduate degree. Additionally, the commission shall set forth eligibility criteria that the student shall meet to receive a LIFE Scholarship stipend, which must include a contractual requirement, including a default provision, that the stipend recipient shall upon graduation work in a South Carolina public school for at least one school year for every year the stipend is received.

 (D) A person who qualified for the LIFE Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year:

 (1) shall remain so qualified and eligible for the LIFE Scholarship stipend on that basis, notwithstanding revisions in eligibility criteria applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year; and

 (2) is exempt from the contractual work requirement of education majors in subsection (C).

 (E) The Commission on Higher Education annually shall communicate with high school guidance counselors regarding the list of qualifying majors in this section.

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend recipients, education majors added

SECTION 2. Section 59‑104‑25(A) and (B) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A) A resident student who is at least a sophomore attending a four‑year public or private institution of higher learning in this State, who is majoring in education, science, or mathematics as defined below, and who is receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for the current year, shall receive an additional Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend equal to the cost of attendance after applying all other scholarships or grants, not to exceed three thousand three hundred dollars each year for no more than three additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if the student enrolled in a four‑year degree program, or for not more than four additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in a five‑year degree program or a 3 plus 2 program. A year is defined as thirty credit hours of instruction or its equivalent each year. To receive the additional Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend each year, the student must receive the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for that year and must be making acceptable progress each year toward receiving a degree in his education, science, or mathematics major. In addition, during his freshman year, the student majoring in science or mathematics must have successfully completed a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics courses, or life and physical science courses, or a combination of both. For purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses during a student’s freshman year, advanced placement courses in mathematics and life and physical sciences taken in high school on which the student scored high enough on the advanced placement test to receive credit at his institution and for which he received credit, count toward the fulfillment of this minimum requirement.

 (B) The Commission on Higher Education by regulation shall define what constitutes a science or mathematics major, applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year to persons who did not receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year. This definition of a science or mathematics major must include, at a minimum, majors in science or mathematics disciplines, computer science or informational technology, engineering, accounting, and health care and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry; provided, that nothing herein prevents a student from changing majors within acceptable science or mathematics disciplines.

 (C) The Commission on Higher Education shall by regulation define what constitutes an education major for purposes of this section, applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year to persons who did not receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year. This definition of an education major must include, in addition to other subjects considered appropriate by the commission, (1) mathematics education majors, (2) science education majors, and (3) students who major in mathematics, science, or another subject and obtain teacher certification in a subject area related to their major prior to completion of their undergraduate degree. Additionally, the commission shall set forth eligibility criteria that the student shall meet to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend, which must include a contractual requirement, including a default provision, that the stipend recipient shall upon graduation work in a South Carolina public school for at least one school year for every year the stipend is received.

 (D) A person who qualified for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year:

 (1) shall remain so qualified and eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend on that basis, notwithstanding revisions in eligibility criteria applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year; and

 (2) is exempt from the contractual work requirement of education majors in subsection (C).

 (E) The Commission on Higher Education annually shall communicate with high school guidance counselors regarding the list of qualifying majors in this section.

LIFE Scholarship eligibility, ACT scores, future minimum score adjustments

SECTION 3. Section 59‑149‑50(A) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (A)(1) To be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, a student must be either a student who has graduated from a high school located in this State, a student who has completed at least three of the final four years of high school within this State, a home school student who has successfully completed a high school home school program in this State in the manner required by law, a student who has graduated from a preparatory high school outside this State, while a dependent of a parent or guardian who is a legal resident of this State and has custody of the dependent, or a student whose parent or guardian has served in or has retired from one of the United States Armed Forces within the last four years, paid income taxes in this State for a majority of the years of service, and is a resident of this State. These students also must meet the requirements of subsection (B) and be eligible for in‑state tuition and fees as determined pursuant to Chapter 112, Title 59 and applicable regulations. In addition, the student must have graduated from high school with a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade average on a 4.0 scale and, subject to modification as provided in item (2), have scored 1100 or better on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or have the equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission on Higher Education; provided that, if the student is to attend such a public or independent two‑year college or university in this State, including a technical college, the SAT/ACT requirement does not apply. If a student chooses to attend such a public or independent institution of this State and does not make the required SAT/ACT score or the required high school grade point average, as applicable, the student may earn a LIFE Scholarship after his freshman year if he meets the grade point average and semester credit hour requirements of subsection (B). For the purpose of meeting the rank criteria pursuant to this section, the existing high school rank of a South Carolina resident attending an out‑of‑state high school may be used provided it is calculated pursuant to a state‑approved, standardized grading scale at the respective out‑of‑state high school. If the Commission on Higher Education determines that a state‑approved standardized grading scale substantially deviates from the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale, the state‑approved standardized grading scale shall not be used to meet the eligibility requirements for the LIFE Scholarship.

 (2) After the 2024‑2025 School Year, if the scoring scale range of the SAT is changed, the Commission on Higher Education shall adjust the minimum SAT/ACT score required in item (1) in order to maintain a minimum scoring requirement that is the functional equivalent of the 2024‑2025 standards. In determining whether the SAT/ACT score of an applicant meets the minimum requirements of this section after such an adjustment is made, a college or university shall apply the minimum scoring requirement in effect on the date that the test was taken.

Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, use at two-year and four-year institutions

SECTION 4. Section 59‑104‑20(H) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (H) Notwithstanding another provision of law, a student who met the initial eligibility requirements to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Award as a senior in high school and has met the continuing eligibility requirements shall receive the award. A student who received a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Award as a senior in high school but declined the award is eligible to reapply for the annual scholarship, providing he meets all of the initial and continuing academic eligibility requirements of the Palmetto Fellows program, if he transfers to a qualifying South Carolina institution of higher learning. The number of semesters or academic years a student attended an out‑of‑state institution are to be deducted from the number of semesters or academic years a student is eligible for the scholarship. All funding provided for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships regardless of its source or allocation must be used to implement the provisions of this subsection. A student who uses a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to attend an eligible two‑year institution shall receive a maximum of four continuous semesters, and may continue to use the scholarship to attend an eligible four‑year institution, subject to the maximum number of semesters for which the student may be eligible for the scholarship.

Time effective

SECTION 5. This act takes effect July 1, 2024.

Ratified the 15th day of May, 2024.

Approved the 20th day of May, 2024.

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