



State of Wisconsin
2025 - 2026 LEGISLATURE

LRB-2672/1

JAM:cdc

2025 SENATE BILL 210

April 16, 2025 - Introduced by Senators TOMCZYK, JAMES, QUINN and MARKLEIN, cosponsored by Representatives GREEN, BRILL, B. JACOBSON, KNODL, KREIBICH, O'CONNOR, SNYDER, SPIROS, SWEARINGEN and WITTKE. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 **AN ACT** *to repeal* 39.41 (1m) (b), 39.41 (1m) (c) 3., 39.41 (1m) (c) 5., 39.41 (1m)
2 (e) and 39.41 (8); *to amend* 39.41 (1) (bm), 39.41 (1m) (a) 1., 39.41 (1m) (c) 4.,
3 39.41 (1m) (d), 39.41 (1m) (g), 39.41 (1m) (h), 39.41 (1m) (j) and 39.41 (1m) (m)
4 of the statutes; **relating to:** changes to amount of, and criteria for designating
5 recipients of, academic excellence higher education scholarships.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, certain high school seniors who have the highest grade point average in their class may be eligible to receive an “academic excellence higher education scholarship” (scholarship) amounting to not more than \$2,250 per academic year in relief of the individual’s future tuition and fees assessed at participating technical colleges, University of Wisconsin System institutions, and private institutions of higher education. The criteria used to determine the selection of the individuals who will receive the scholarship differs by the number of pupils enrolled in each high school. The school board or governing body of a high school with enrollment of less than 80 pupils may nominate one senior from that high school, and the executive secretary of the Higher Educational Aids Board may designate not more than 10 individuals statewide who were so nominated under that category who may receive the scholarship. However, if the high school has more than 80 but less than 500 pupils, the school board or governing body of the

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high school may designate one senior to receive the scholarship with no required nomination process or designation from HEAB, and the school boards or governing bodies of high schools with even larger enrollment sizes may designate multiple seniors to receive the scholarship relief.

Under this bill, the school board or governing body of a high school with enrollment of at least one pupil but less than 500 pupils may designate one senior to receive the scholarship with no nomination process or designation from HEAB. The bill also clarifies that a senior eligible to receive the scholarship relief does not include a pupil enrolled in a home-based private educational program.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 39.41 (1) (bm) of the statutes is amended to read:

39.41 (1) (bm) “Senior” means a pupil enrolled in the 12th grade in a public or private high school, a tribal school, the school operated by the Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or the school operated by the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. “Senior” does not include a pupil enrolled in a home-based private educational program, as defined in s.115.001 (3g).

SECTION 2. 39.41 (1m) (a) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

39.41 (1m) (a) 1. For each high school with an enrollment of at least ~~80 pupils~~ one pupil but less than 500 pupils, designate the senior with the highest grade point average in all subjects as a scholar.

SECTION 3. 39.41 (1m) (b) of the statutes is repealed.

SECTION 4. 39.41 (1m) (c) 3. of the statutes is repealed.

SECTION 5. 39.41 (1m) (c) 4. of the statutes is amended to read:

39.41 (1m) (c) 4. For each public, private, or tribal high school with an enrollment of at least ~~80 pupils~~, one pupil, notify the school board of the school

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1 district operating the public high school or the governing body of the private or
2 tribal high school of the number of scholars to be designated under par. (a).

3 **SECTION 6.** 39.41 (1m) (c) 5. of the statutes is repealed.

4 **SECTION 7.** 39.41 (1m) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

5 39.41 **(1m)** (d) By February 25 of each school year, if 2 or more seniors from
6 the same high school of at least ~~80 pupils~~ one pupil have the same grade point
7 average and, except for the limitation on the number of designated scholars, are
8 otherwise eligible for designation under par. (a), the faculty of the high school shall
9 select the applicable number of seniors for designation under par. (a) as scholars
10 and shall certify, in order of priority, any remaining seniors with the same grade
11 point average as alternates for the scholars or, if there is no remaining senior with
12 the same grade point average, any remaining seniors with the next highest grade
13 point average, but not less than 3.800 or the equivalent, as alternates for the
14 scholars. If a senior from that high school designated as a scholar under par. (a)
15 does not qualify for a higher education scholarship under sub. (2) (a) or (3) (a), an
16 alternate for the scholar with the same grade point average as any senior from that
17 high school designated as a scholar under par. (a) shall be eligible for a higher
18 education scholarship as a scholar under sub. (2) (a) or (3) (a) until the scholarship
19 may be awarded by the board. If an alternate with the same grade point average as
20 a scholar under par. (a) does not qualify for a higher education scholarship under
21 sub. (2) (a) or (3) (a), an alternate with the next highest grade point average, but not
22 less than 3.800 or the equivalent, shall be eligible for a higher education scholarship
23 as a scholar under sub. (2) (a) or (3) (a) until the scholarship may be awarded by the
24 board.

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SECTION 8. 39.41 (1m) (e) of the statutes is repealed.

SECTION 9. 39.41 (1m) (g) of the statutes is amended to read:

39.41 **(1m)** (g) Notwithstanding par. (a), if a high school of at least ~~80 pupils~~
one pupil closes or merges in the 1991-92 school year or in any school year
thereafter, the school board of the school district operating the high school or the
governing body of the private or tribal high school shall, subject to par. (d), for each
of the 2 school years following the closure or merger, designate the same number of
scholars from among the pupils enrolled in the high school at the time of closure or
merger as the number of scholars designated for that high school in the school year
the high school closed or merged. Any seniors designated under this paragraph
shall be eligible for an original scholarship under this section.

SECTION 10. 39.41 (1m) (h) of the statutes is amended to read:

39.41 **(1m)** (h) Notwithstanding par. (a), if a public high school of at least ~~80~~
~~pupils~~ one pupil closed following the 1989-90 school year and a pupil from the closed
high school was designated a scholar under this section for either of the 2 school
years following the closure by the school board of a school district operating a high
school that enrolled pupils from the closed high school, such school board shall
designate the senior with the next highest grade point average for that school year
as a scholar. Any scholar designated under this paragraph shall be eligible for a
higher education scholarship under sub. (2) (b) or (3) (b) as determined under par.
(a), notwithstanding that the scholar did not receive a higher education scholarship
for the academic year immediately following the school year in which the pupil from
the closed high school was designated a scholar under this section.

SECTION 11. 39.41 (1m) (j) of the statutes is amended to read:

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39.41 (1m) (j) In the event that 2 or more seniors from the same high school of at least 80 pupils one pupil have the same grade point average and are otherwise eligible for designation under par. (a), the school board of the school district operating the high school or the governing body of the private or tribal high school shall make the designation of the faculty of the high school for purposes of par. (d) or (i).

SECTION 12. 39.41 (1m) (m) of the statutes is amended to read:

39.41 (1m) (m) Notwithstanding pars. ~~(a), (b)~~ (a) and (d), if a high school ranks its seniors on the basis of grades in academic subjects, the school board of the school district operating the high school or the governing body of the private high school ~~or, for purposes of par. (d), the faculty of the high school~~ may request a waiver from the executive secretary in order to fulfill its requirements under par. ~~(a), (b)~~ (a) or (d) on the basis of grade point averages in academic subjects.

SECTION 13. 39.41 (8) of the statutes is repealed.

(END)