



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 380**

February Session, 2026



**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO SUPPORT PROMISE PROGRAMS IN THE STATE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section,  
2 "promise program" means a scholarship program that provides a  
3 scholarship in conjunction with services and resources, including, but  
4 not limited to, mentoring, peer support networks and internships, to  
5 scholarship recipients to ensure the postsecondary academic success of  
6 such recipients.

7 (b) (1) Not later than September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the  
8 Office of Higher Education shall provide a grant to each promise  
9 program in the state that was established during or prior to the previous  
10 fiscal year. Such grant shall be in an amount equal to three thousand  
11 dollars per student enrolled in such promise program.

12 (2) Not later than July 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, each promise  
13 program that receives a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this  
14 subsection shall report to the Office of Higher Education the rate of  
15 graduation, postsecondary program enrollment and job placement  
16 achieved by the students enrolled in such promise program during the  
17 fiscal year in which such grant was received.

18 (c) The Office of Higher Education shall establish a program to  
19 support the establishment of new promise programs throughout the  
20 state, with a goal of establishing eight new promise programs not later  
21 than January 1, 2031, prioritizing the establishment of promise  
22 programs that serve students in alliance districts, as defined in section  
23 10-262u of the general statutes. The office shall coordinate with  
24 municipalities and regional coalitions interested in establishing new  
25 promise programs. The office shall support each new promise program  
26 through the provision of (1) funding, in an amount designated by the  
27 commissioner of said office, for the start-up expenses of such promise  
28 program, and (2) technical assistance to start such promise program,  
29 including, but not limited to, (A) initial funding strategies, (B)  
30 stakeholder engagement, including, but not limited to, with each local  
31 or regional board of education, legislative body and local nonprofit  
32 organization and business of the municipality or region in which such  
33 new promise program is located, (C) program design based on the local  
34 environment, (D) development of evaluation metrics, and (E)  
35 sustainability planning. The office shall hire a consultant with expertise  
36 in the development and operation of promise programs to implement  
37 the provisions of this subsection.

38 (d) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter until  
39 January 1, 2031, or until the establishment of eight new promise  
40 programs, whichever is earlier, the Office of Higher Education shall  
41 submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general  
42 statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly  
43 having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and  
44 employment advancement a progress report from the consultant hired  
45 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section on the establishment of new  
46 promise programs in the state.

47 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:

48 (1) "Net cost of attendance" means the rate of tuition and required  
49 fees that are established by an institution of higher education for the  
50 academic year commencing with the fall semester of 2026, minus an

51 average amount of financial aid received by a student in such student's  
52 income bracket;

53 (2) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and  
54 federal, state and institutional aid received each academic year by a  
55 qualifying student. "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or  
56 private student loans received by a qualifying student;

57 (3) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) is a resident of  
58 the state, (B) attended from grades nine to twelve, inclusive, and  
59 graduated from a public or nonpublic high school in the state, with a  
60 cumulative attendance rate of not less than ninety per cent, (C) enrolls,  
61 not more than one year after graduating from such high school, as a full-  
62 time student for the academic year commencing with the fall semester  
63 of 2026, or any academic year thereafter, at an institution of higher  
64 education in a program leading to a bachelor's degree, (D) is making  
65 satisfactory academic progress while enrolled at such institution, (E)  
66 maintains good academic standing, as determined by such institution,  
67 while enrolled at such institution, (F) has completed the Free  
68 Application for Federal Student Aid, and (G) has accepted all available  
69 financial aid;

70 (4) "Institution of higher education" means each (A) constituent unit,  
71 as defined in section 10a-1 of the general statutes, of the state system of  
72 higher education, and (B) nonprofit institution established in the state  
73 (i) that has degree-granting authority in the state; (ii) that has its main  
74 campus located in the state; (iii) that is not included in the state system  
75 of public higher education; and (iv) whose primary function is not the  
76 preparation of students for religious vocation;

77 (5) "Full-time student" means a student who is enrolled at an  
78 institution of higher education and is carrying twelve or more credit  
79 hours in a semester; and

80 (6) "First-year experience program" means a program of support to  
81 assist a student in the student's transition from high school to higher  
82 education through the provision of specialized academic support, peer

83 mentorship, orientation and connection to campus resources  
84 throughout the student's first academic year at an institution of higher  
85 education.

86 (b) The Office of Higher Education shall establish a grant program  
87 known as the Scholar Success Grant Program. For the academic year  
88 commencing with the fall semester of 2026, and each academic year  
89 thereafter, the office shall award a Scholar Success Grant to each  
90 qualifying student at the following percentage of the net cost of  
91 attendance at (1) a public institution of higher education in the state: (A)  
92 Forty per cent for a qualifying student with a household income of thirty  
93 thousand dollars or less, (B) thirty-six per cent for a qualifying student  
94 with a household income greater than thirty thousand dollars, but not  
95 more than forty-eight thousand dollars, (C) thirty-two per cent for a  
96 qualifying student with a household income greater than forty-eight  
97 thousand dollars, but not more than seventy-five thousand dollars, (D)  
98 twenty-eight per cent for a qualifying student with a household income  
99 greater than seventy-five thousand dollars, but not more than one  
100 hundred ten thousand dollars, and (E) twenty-four per cent for a  
101 qualifying student with a household income greater than one hundred  
102 ten thousand dollars, or (2) an independent institution of higher  
103 education, as defined in section 10a-173 of the general statutes: (A)  
104 Twenty per cent for a qualifying student with a household income of  
105 thirty thousand dollars or less, (B) sixteen per cent for a qualifying  
106 student with a household income greater than thirty thousand dollars,  
107 but not more than forty-eight thousand dollars, (C) twelve per cent for  
108 a qualifying student with a household income greater than forty-eight  
109 thousand dollars, but not more than seventy-five thousand dollars, (D)  
110 eight per cent for a qualifying student with a household income greater  
111 than seventy-five thousand dollars, but not more than one hundred ten  
112 thousand dollars, and (E) eight per cent for a qualifying student with a  
113 household income greater than one hundred ten thousand dollars. Such  
114 grant shall be available to such qualifying student for not more than six  
115 consecutive academic years or until such qualifying student graduates,  
116 whichever occurs sooner. The office shall provide each Scholar Success

117 Grant directly to the institution of higher education in which such  
118 student enrolls, provided such institution complies with the  
119 requirements set forth in subsection (c) of this section.

120 (c) To receive a Scholar Success Grant from the Office of Higher  
121 Education for any qualifying student who enrolls at an institution of  
122 higher education, such institution shall: (1) Enroll each qualifying  
123 student in a first-year experience program at such institution, (2) enroll  
124 each qualifying student in a financial literacy program during the spring  
125 or summer prior to such qualifying student's first academic year at such  
126 institution, (3) provide to each qualifying student a transparent  
127 multiyear financial aid award letter in an easily understood format that  
128 includes, but is not limited to, the net cost of attendance, designation of  
129 any one-time awards or costs and an explanation of student loan  
130 expectations, and (4) assign to each qualifying student an advisor who  
131 shall advise such qualifying student when making financial, academic  
132 or career decisions from the time such qualifying student accepts  
133 admission to such institution until such qualifying student graduates.

134 (d) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the Office  
135 of Higher Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the  
136 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing  
137 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
138 relating to higher education and employment advancement. Such report  
139 shall include, but need not be limited to, the (1) number of qualifying  
140 students receiving Scholar Success Grants during the current academic  
141 year, (2) household income brackets of such students, and (3) amount of  
142 such grants received by each institution of higher education for the  
143 academic year during which the office submits such report.

144 Sec. 3. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of four million eight hundred  
145 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Office of Higher Education,  
146 from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for  
147 grants to promise programs pursuant to section 1 of this act.

148 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of thirty million dollars is

149 appropriated to the Office of Higher Education, from the General Fund,  
150 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for the Scholar Success Grant  
151 Program established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 1(c)(1), "executive director" was changed to "commissioner" for accuracy; in Section 1(c)(2)(B), "with" was inserted before "each local" and "of the municipality or region in which such new promise program is located" was inserted after "business" for clarity; and in Section 2(d), "2026" was changed to "2027" for accuracy.

**HED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*