

SENATE No. 602

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act establishing a healthy child scholarship..

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Whereas, Governor Deval Patrick and the Executive Office of Health and Human
2 Services have announced a comprehensive plan called Mass in Motion to promote healthier
3 lifestyles and combat overweight and obesity in the Commonwealth; and

4 Whereas, one of the programs established through Mass in Motion will mandate Body
5 Mass Index (BMI) testing of students attending public schools in the Commonwealth; and

6 Whereas, one-third of middle and high school students in the Commonwealth are
7 reportedly overweight or obese; and

8 Whereas, being overweight or obesity increases the risk of developing serious medical
9 conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, certain forms of cancer, and stroke; and

10 Whereas, those with serious medical conditions place greater demands on the health care
11 system and increase costs; and

12 Whereas, healthy lifestyles can begin during adolescence; and

Whereas, it is in the interest of the Commonwealth to contain rising health care costs and encourage our students to exercise and eat healthy;

Therefore, be it enacted, as follows:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 16 the following section:-

Section 16A. Healthy Child Scholarship

The board of higher education, in consultation with the department of public health, shall establish a “Healthy Child Scholarship.” The board shall adopt guidelines governing the implementation of the scholarship, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) the scholarship shall be awarded to tenth grade students attending public schools in the Commonwealth who are within an acceptable BMI range or who have improved their BMI since the test was last administered in middle school, provided in both instances that BMI testing is administered at the school;

(2) the amount of the scholarship shall not be less than \$100 and shall not be presented publicly by any state or local authority or official;

(3) the scholarship shall be presented by the board on behalf of the governor and the legislature, but under no circumstances shall the scholarship funds shall be distributed until the student verifies enrollment in an undergraduate or associate degree program at a state institution of higher learning. The board shall make each recipient aware of the guidelines of the scholarship program.

34 (4) the board shall document the name and contact information of each scholarship
35 recipient and shall make reasonable efforts to notify recipients during their senior year of high
36 school of the scholarship funds they have been awarded and the eligibility for receiving such
37 funds.

38 The board and the department of public health shall promulgate such regulations and
39 other written guidance as needed to implement and administer the scholarship.