



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Mike Flanagan

DATE: March 26, 2007

SUBJECT: **Approval of the Changes to the Criteria and Procedures for the Award of the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship for 2008-2009**

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship is a federal scholarship established in 1986 to promote student excellence and recognize exceptionally able students who show promise of continued success. Scholars are to be selected on the basis of academic achievement and may use their scholarship at any U.S. college or university. The letter sent to Michigan high schools with accompanying fact sheet for the 2007-2008 program are shown in Attachments A and B.

There are several changes that staff of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority (MHEAA) would like to make in the program.

1. Selection Criteria

MDE and MHEAA staff recommends that high schools forward all students who have the exact same total scores (a combination of grade point average and Michigan Merit Examination scores) to MHEAA, since one school may have two or more top performers who actually out-score the nominees from other schools.

MHEAA would then award scholarships based on available funding and the criteria that at least ten students are to be nominated and awarded the scholarship from each of Michigan's fifteen Congressional Districts. This requirement helps to assure that there is an equitable distribution of the scholarships across the state.

2. Replacement of ACT and SAT Scores

MDE and MHEAA staff recommends that scores of the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) be used in place of the SAT and ACT scores.

Since these proposed changes would take effect next school year, all students would have a set of MME scores, either from having taken the MME this spring, or having retested in the fall of their senior year. We propose to revise the

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nomination form to show the MME English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies scores, and use a total of these four scores to determine eligibility. The maximum score on each MME exam is 1250, so the sum of the four exams would be 5000, which when divided by 50 equals a maximum score of 100. This would encourage top-performing students to strive to do their best on the ACT portion and pass the other sections of the MME with as high a score as possible. A copy of the proposed revised application form showing the use of the MME scores is shown in Attachment C.

3. MDE and MHEAA Administrative Responsibilities

MDE and MHEAA staff recommends that a memorandum of understanding be authorized to describe and formalize the responsibilities in the administration of the program.

In 1987 the Board authorized overall implementation of the Byrd Scholarship through MHEAA, which at that time was housed within MDE. The Board also designated the Academic All-State Program sponsored by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and the Detroit Free Press as the process by which scholars would be nominated and selected. Since then, Executive Order 1995-3 transferred MHEAA to the Department of Treasury. Also, in 2005, the Academic All-State Program ended. The Board did not anticipate that scholars would be selected without using the Academic All-State process. The Board had already authorized MHEAA with overall implementation of the Byrd Scholarship.

Since MHEAA is no longer housed under MDE, a memorandum of understanding between MDE and MHEAA is desirable to formalize the selection process. MHEAA would work directly with high school principals to nominate and select eligible students based on criteria approved by the Board.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the proposed changes to the criteria and procedures for the award of the Robert C. Byrd Scholarship for 2008-2009.



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

ROBERT J. KLEINE
STATE TREASURER

Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship

February 2007

Dear Director of Guidance

The Robert C. Byrd Honors (Byrd) Scholarship is a federally funded program established to promote student excellence and achievement and to recognize exceptional students who show promise of continued excellence. The Byrd Scholarship provides a \$1,500 award that a deserving student can take to any degree-granting school in the United States. The award may be renewable for three additional years subject to approved funding. Approximately 200 scholarships are awarded each year.

Enclosed is a *Fact Sheet* which describes the Byrd Scholarship in more detail. We urge your principal to nominate the outstanding senior at your school with the highest numerical score using the enclosed *2007 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Nomination* form. The deadline for submission of the nomination form is **March 9, 2007**. Please note that there can be only **one** nominee per high school. In the event of a tie, it is the school's responsibility to select one nominee for submission. Scholarship recipients and their respective high school principals will be notified of awards in April.

The enclosed *Fact Sheet* and nomination form can also be found on our Web site at www.michigan.gov/studentaid. If you have questions concerning the program, please contact the Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants, at the toll-free number listed below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Wohlfert".

Anne Wohlfert, Director
Office of Scholarships and Grants

Enclosures

c: High School Principal



Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Fact Sheet Academic Year 2007-08

Attachment B



Helping Students Pay for College

Description

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship is a federally funded program administered by the State of Michigan, Office of Scholarships and Grants. It was established to promote student excellence and achievement and to recognize exceptional students who show promise of continued excellence. This merit-based program provides approximately 200 awards per year for up to four years to graduating high school students who have achieved academic excellence. The financial resources of the family are not a criterion for determining eligibility. The federal law requires that awards be geographically distributed.

Application

There is no application for students to submit. Each spring, high school principals nominate one outstanding graduating senior, based upon high school academic achievement and college aptitude test scores. The principal will use a mathematical formula to combine the grade point average and SAT or ACT scores.

Program Limits

The current maximum award is \$1,500. The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship and all other financial aid for which the scholar qualifies cannot exceed the cost of attendance. The award is for the first year of study at any college or university in the United States and is renewable for three additional years of undergraduate study. Future awards are subject to available and approved funding.

Eligibility

- Possess a high school diploma or GED certificate
- Enroll full time at an eligible Michigan postsecondary or out-of-state institution that participates in Federal Title IV student aid programs
- Be a legal Michigan resident
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Be registered with the Selective Service, if applicable.

Students entering U.S. Military Academies are not eligible for consideration.

For More Information

Visit www.michigan.gov/studentaid. Contact the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program, Office of Scholarships and Grants, at the toll-free number 1-888-4-GRANTS (1-888-447-2687) or e-mail osg@michigan.gov.

Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Nomination

Academic Year 2008-09

Issued under authority of Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship is administered by the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority (MHEAA), Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants.

INSTRUCTIONS: The high school principal of each school may nominate one outstanding graduating senior for the 2007 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship. Using the Scoring Formula in Part 3, calculate the nominating score and nominate the student with the highest total score. **If more than one student has the highest score, submit both students.**

Submit a copy of the grade transcript including verification of Michigan Merit Exam (MME) scores. Return this form and attachments by **March 1, 2008** to: Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants, P.O. Box 30462, Lansing MI 48909-7962.

For additional information, visit www.michigan.gov/studentaid or call toll-free 1-888-4-GRANTS (1-888-447-2687)

Part 1: Student Information

Student Name		Home Address (No., Street, P.O. Box, Rural Route)			
Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Home Telephone ()	City	State	ZIP Code	
Student Is (Check one, Required)			Date of Birth		Social Security Number
<input type="checkbox"/> United States citizen or national					
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent resident of the U.S. and has an Alien Registration Card (I-551, I-551c or I-94)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Not a citizen or permanent resident					

Part 2: School Information

School Name	Address (No., Street, P.O. Box)			
School District	City	State	ZIP Code	
County Where School Is Located	School Telephone Number ()	School U.S. Congressional District No. (1-15)*		
Signature of Principal (Required)	Print Principal Name			

Part 3: Scoring Formula

Step	Calculation	Final Score
1.	Grade Point Average (GPA) (Convert to 4.0 scale and round to three decimals.) Use grades only from: Math, English, Science, Social Sciences, and Foreign Language (if applicable) for all semesters through the first half of senior year. Score cannot be greater than 1,000 (i.e. 5.0 x 250 = 1,000). GPA Score _____ Multiply by 250 _____ <i>Carry total to Final Score column.</i>	
2.	Michigan Merit Exam (MME) English Language Arts..... _____ Mathematics..... _____ Science..... _____ Social Studies _____ Total of 4 scores _____ Divide by 50 _____ = MME Composite Score <i>Carry total to Final Score column.</i>	
3.	Total Final Score. Cannot exceed 1,100.	

* Locate the U.S. Congressional District for your school on this Web site: www.michigan.gov/documents/Congress01-state-E_43697_7.pdf