

Information Sheet for the Paraprofessional Tuition Assistance Scholarship Program

South Dakota Department of Education / Office of Indian Education

The Paraprofessional Tuition Assistance Scholarship Program

The purpose of the scholarship program is to allow the pursuit of a teaching degree and South Dakota teacher certification by the paraprofessionals employed by qualifying schools. The program has the capacity to serve 10 participants and the potential to serve up to 20 participants, depending on the number of completed college credits applicants possess. Participants will be selected through a competitive application process.

- Established by Senate Bill 81
- Legislation link: <http://legis.sd.gov/docs/legsession/2016/Bills/SB81ENR.pdf>

Participants will be provided with a scholarship to cover the cost of tuition and fees as a full-time student. The lead postsecondary institutions currently participating in the program are Black Hills State University in Spearfish, S.D., and Sinte Gleska University in Mission, S.D. Classes will be taken online, along with a limited number of designated modules to be delivered at Sinte Gleska. Funding for the scholarships is only available for four years.

What is a qualifying school?

- Is an accredited public school in South Dakota;
- Is willing to collaborate with the accredited postsecondary institution on student teaching and other associated requirements of the elementary or secondary education program;
- Serves a student population for which the school-level results for the 2014-15 academic year on the state academic assessment are below the statewide average proficiency in English language arts and mathematics; and
- Serves a student population of which at least 50% is comprised of Native American students.

Applicants must meet each of the following requirements:

- Be employed as a paraprofessional in a qualifying public school;
- Be recommended for the program by a principal in the qualifying public school; and
- Enroll in an accredited postsecondary institution located in South Dakota that participates in the program and offers a baccalaureate degree in elementary or secondary education.

Those chosen for the scholarship must meet all of the following requirements in order to maintain eligibility:

- Maintain enrollment at the accredited postsecondary institution;
- Maintain a cumulative 2.8 grade point average on a 4.0 scale;
- Make satisfactory academic progress toward a degree as determined by the student's program of study; and
- Continue working as a paraprofessional in the qualifying school while taking coursework.