

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 10-09

COMMITTEE DATE: December 1, 2009

BOARD DATE: December 8, 2009

**AMENDED GUIDELINES FOR THE STANLEY Z. KOPLIK CERTIFICATE OF
MASTERY TUITION WAIVER**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached amended guidelines for the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Tuition Waiver Program.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15A, Section 9 (i) and 19

Contact: Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Senior Deputy Commissioner, Access and Student Financial Assistance

Motion Background

Implemented in 2000, the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery recognizes student performance and achievement on a variety of academic measures, including the MCAS, SAT I and II exam, and Advance Placement (AP) course work. Honoring the memory of Chancellor Stanley Z. Koplik, the Certificate of Mastery is awarded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Recipients are eligible to receive a waiver of tuition for four years (eight semesters) at a Massachusetts public college or university. The average tuition waiver expenditure is approximately \$850,000 per academic year.

The attached guidelines have been amended to provide clarification of student eligibility and to provide guidance to institutions in awarding the waiver.

SECTION R: STANLEY Z. KOPLIK CERTIFICATE OF MASTERY TUITION WAIVER

DEFINITIONS:

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS:

An institution within the system of public higher education as identified in Section 5 of Chapter 15 A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

Any state-supported undergraduate degree program offered by an eligible institution.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

An undergraduate student who has been admitted to an eligible institution and meets the following criteria:

- a) a student who has graduated from a Massachusetts high school and awarded a Certificate of Mastery by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Note: An earned GED does not fulfill the high school graduation requirement.)
- b) is a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for at least one year prior to the start of the academic year and who is a United States citizen or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations
- c) is enrolled full-time in a Massachusetts college or university the first traditional academic semester (fall) following high school graduation
- d) continues to enroll as a full-time student in consecutive traditional semesters in an eligible Massachusetts college or university.
- e) maintains a cumulative 3.3 GPA on all academic coursework at the institution awarding the degree; or if transferring, has maintained a 3.3 GPA at the transfer institution
- f) annually files the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- g) maintains Satisfactory Academic Progress in accordance with institutional standards
- h) is in compliance with applicable law regarding Selective Service
- i) is not in default with applicable law regarding any federal or state education loans for attendance at any institution or owes a refund for any previous financial aid received

CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY:

- Initial recipients of the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Tuition Waiver shall maintain a G.P.A. of 3.3 for continued eligibility for the tuition waiver for up to eight semesters of study
- The institution is responsible for verifying the cumulative GPA at the end of the spring semester of each academic year; if the student drops below the required 3.3 GPA, the tuition waiver is forfeited for the duration of the student's enrollment
- Recipients must continue to meet eligibility criteria during each period that the waiver is granted

AWARD VALUE:

The Board of Higher Education is authorized to award non-need-based tuition waivers for state-supported undergraduate courses to recipients of the Certificate of Mastery by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The award under this program shall be equal to the value of required tuition (not including fees) for all state-supported undergraduate courses. The waiver of tuition may be awarded to eligible students for a maximum of four years or eight semesters of continuous enrollment (not including summer terms).

AWARD PROCEDURE:

Certificate of Mastery Tuition Waivers recipients shall be responsible for submitting documentation of such awards to the institution where he/she will enroll.

The institution shall award tuition waivers to eligible students based on the defined eligibility criteria and any institution specific criteria as established by the participating college or university.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:

All institutions must file a State Financial Aid Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the State Office of Student Financial Assistance.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS:

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain adequate documentation of a student's eligibility
- b) The Commissioner shall require each campus to furnish annually by August 31 a report detailing the number of Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Tuition Waiver recipients for the previous year and the corresponding amount of tuition waived
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall at all times be open to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The

institution shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.