Home > Question of the Month: Do any Midwestern states have an automatic admissions policy for qualifying students to attend their public universities?

| Tim Anderson [1] |

As of February 2017, nine states, including two in the Midwest, had some kind of automatic admissions policy in place, according to the Education Commission of the States [2]. These policies guarantee that an in-state student will be admitted to a public university if he or she meets certain academic criteria.

South Dakota joined that list of states this fall, when the state Department of Education announced a new “proactive admissions initiative” [3]. To be eligible, high school students must meet one of two benchmarks: 1) perform at a certain level on the state-administered assessment of math and English skills, or 2) have an ACT composite score of 18 or higher.

Meeting one of these criteria guarantees “general acceptance” into South Dakota’s six public universities and four technical institutes (some specific college majors may have more-stringent admissions standards). All qualifying high school seniors in the state will receive an acceptance letter. This proactive admissions initiative (a partnership of the South Dakota Department of Education, Board of Regents and Board of Technical Education) has two central objectives: first, ensure students are aware of their postsecondary opportunities; and two, retain more of the state’s homegrown talent.

The Education Commission of the States lists Iowa and Kansas as also having automatic admissions policies for in-state students. Guaranteed entry in Iowa is based on four factors: a student’s composite ACT score, high school class ranking, grade-point average, and the number of courses taken in core subject areas. Those four indicators are calculated into the Regent Admission Index [4]; any student with an index score of 245 or more can attend one of Iowa’s three public universities.

In Kansas, students are guaranteed admission if they graduate with a GPA of 2.0 and meet one of these three criteria: 1) have an ACT composite score of 21 or higher; 2) have an SAT score of 980 or higher on math and critical reading; or 3) rank in the top third of their high school graduating class. These standards apply to five of the six public universities in Kansas. “Assured admission” [5] into the University of Kansas, however, requires a grade-point average of at least 3.0 (it must be 3.25 or higher for any student with an ACT score below 24).

Texas has perhaps the most well-known automatic admissions policy [6]. The result of legislation passed in 1997, this policy requires the state’s public universities and colleges to accept students who finished in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class. The lone exception to this rule applies to the University of Texas-Austin, which instead must automatically admit enough students to fill 75 percent of available in-state resident spaces. As a result of this modification to the state law, only applicants who finish in the top 7 percent of their graduating class will be guaranteed admission to UT-Austin in 2018.

By:
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**Attachment**

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<td>Stateline Midwest: December 2017 [7]</td>
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Tags:
Links

[5] https://admissions.ku.edu/freshman-requirements-deadlines
[6] https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Graduation_Information/Automatic_College_Admission/