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## Medical School Loans

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## Medical School Loans Testimonials

Annie W., Miami, FL

Nearing graduation, I did not want to deal with the stress of my private student loans, especially because I didn't even have a job yet, Medical School Loans was able to process my application and hold until graduation so I didn't have to worry about several payments right out of school.

## IRS REMINDS STUDENTS OF "TAX-ADVANTAGED EDUCATION EXPENSES"

- SURAJIT SEN SHARMA

On September 11th, the IRS news release "Back-to-School Tax Breaks Help Teachers Pay Classroom Costs; Aid Parents, Students With College Tuition" stressed the importance of saving receipts and maintaining expense records to take full advantage of deductions on educational expenses and credits available on federal income tax returns for 2007.

IRS Acting Commissioner Linda Stiff stated, "The start of the school year is a good time to remind parents, students, and teachers to save all receipts related to tax-advantaged education expenses." She further added that good recordkeeping makes sense because it can help avoid missing a deduction or credit come tax time.

The deductions related to educator expenses allow educators, including teachers, to deduct the costs of books, supplies, equipment, and software used in classrooms. Educators working 900 or more hours per school year in public or private elementary or secondary schools are eligible for these tax breaks.

For post-secondary education, three vital tax breaks are available to help parents and students. These are:

- tuition and fees deductions
- Hope credits
- lifetime-learning credits

While Hope and lifetime-learning credits will still exist, tuition and fees deductions will expire this year. Records show that in the 2005 tax year alone, taxpayers claimed tuition and fees deductions totaling almost \$11 billion and education credits totaling nearly \$6.2 billion.

In the case of college education, a taxpayer can claim deductions on any enrollment fees or tuition fees paid for his or her dependant's or own education. However, both education credit and tuition and fees deductions cannot be claimed at the same time for the same student.

The IRS news release mentioned that the new Form 8917 needs to be used to claim tuition and fees deductions for 2007, while education credits will be claimed on Form 8863.

There are several special rules and income limits that apply to each of these tax breaks. IRS Publication 970, "Tax Benefits for Education," helps people understand these special rules and provisions regarding eligibility for education-related tax breaks. Other education-related benefits such as 529 plans, student loan interest deductions, Coverdell education savings accounts, and the education savings bond program are also explained in the publication.

## U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION VISITS ALASKA FOR UPDATES ON NCLB

- NIHIT AURORA

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings visited Nome and Anchorage as part of her continuing tour of Alaska schools to meet with students and discuss their achievements under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Additionally, she observed classrooms and met with education administrators statewide. Senators Ted Stevens and Lisa Murkowski accompanied Secretary Margaret Spellings on the Alaska tour.

Spellings said that she saw some of the challenges that educators face in Alaska but also observed that Alaska's students and schools have made considerable progress. She reiterated that her department is committed to helping the students of Alaska improve and making NCLB more flexible and practicable.

Spellings and Senators Stevens and Murkowski began their tour with a visit to Nome Elementary School in Nome. They observed that the students there have made considerable improvements under the NCLB Act and are approaching the goal of reading and doing math on grade level by 2014. Additionally, preliminary results show that there has been an increase of about 20% in the number of students learning on grade level.

Spellings and Murkowski also visited Anchorage to tour schools. They participated in an all-school assembly at Creekside Park Elementary School. At this school, there has been a 10% improvement in the number of students reading on grade level since 2003.

On the final day of their tour, Spellings and Murkowski visited East High School's Partners for Success program. The Partners for Success program is designed to reduce school-dropout rates of native Alaskan middle and high school students using a variety of innovative methods. Secretary Spellings also named Art LaRue the 2007 American Star of Teaching from Alaska. LaRue is an eight-grade language arts teacher from Clark Middle School in Anchorage.

### ON THE NET

Secretary Spellings Joins Senators Murkowski and Stevens to Discuss No Child Left Behind with Alaska Students, Teachers and Administrators  
[www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/08/08302007.html](http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/08/08302007.html)

Spellings Visits Alaska, Discusses NCLB  
[www.hewi.net](http://www.hewi.net)

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE CONGRESSMAN OPPOSES FINANCIAL AID BILL**

Former Senate Budget Committee Chairman Judd Gregg was the only New Hampshire congressman to vote against a plan to bolster financial aid to students by slashing about \$20 billion in government subsidies to lenders. According to Gregg, the bill will actually cost 2,900 times as much as its supporters say it will save. Criticizing the bill, Gregg said, "The problem with this is that this bill, and the manner in which it's brought to the floor, basically puts a stake through the heart of the budget process." The bill will increase the maximum Pell Grant from a little over \$4,300 to \$5,400 by 2012.

**SDSU HAS NEW ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

San Diego State University has created a \$100,000 endowed scholarship in memory of Carol Forrest, a former member of the SDSU Alumni Association's board of directors. The Carol Forrest, P.E., Memorial Watershed Management Scholarship Endowment will help College of Engineering graduate students interested in studying water resources

affected by storm water and urban runoff. Forrest, who passed away a year ago, was a well-known San Diego-based civil engineer and specialist in erosion and sediment control. Her former employer, Geosyntec Consultants, and widower, Michael Harding, are funding the scholarship.

**UT LEAD TO HELP THE UNDERPRIVILEGED**

Students who have been awarded the Tennessee Pledge and Tennessee Promise scholarships at the University of Tennessee will now be eligible for the UT LEAD program. Returning recipients of African-American Achiever and African-American Incentive Grant scholarships are also eligible for the program. UT LEAD promotes academic excellence and undergraduate success by adding structure to students' first years, providing each participant with a personally assigned academic counselor and leadership development program. Managed by the Student Success Center, UT LEAD is a partner of the Office of Equity and Diversity, the Black Cultural Center, and Career Services and brings together students from diverse backgrounds.