§ 6401-a. State aid for high needs nursing programs for certain independent institutions of higher learning. 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general, special or local law to the contrary, the commissioner is hereby authorized to grant state aid for high needs nursing programs to any independent institution of higher education within the state which meets the requirements of subdivision two of this section, upon application by such institution, such amounts of state aid as are authorized to be paid by subdivision three of this section.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, in order to qualify for state aid grants pursuant to this section, any independent institution of higher education must meet the requirements set forth in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this subdivision.

(a) The institution must be a non-profit college or university incorporated by the regents or by the legislature.

(b) The institution must maintain an earned degree program in nursing, culminating in an associate or higher degree in nursing.

(c) The institution must meet such standards of educational quality applicable to comparable public institutions of higher education, as may be from time to time established by the regents.

(d) The institution must be eligible for state aid under the provisions of the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of New York.

3. The commissioner shall grant such state aid awards within the amounts appropriated for such purpose, not to exceed one million dollars and based on availability of funds, according to a schedule to be determined by the commissioner, to each institution meeting the requirements of subdivision two of this section. Awards shall be distributed in the following amounts:

(a) Two hundred fifty dollars per student enrolled in an earned degree program in nursing at a two year degree granting institution;

(b) Five hundred dollars per student enrolled in an earned degree program in nursing at a four year degree granting institution.

4. The commissioner shall promulgate all rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this section.