

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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HOUSE BILL 269

Short Title: Children w/Disabilities Scholarship Grants. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Jordan, Brandon, Jones, and Stam (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.

Referred to: Education, if favorable, Finance.

March 12, 2013

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO CREATE SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS FOR
3 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 105-151.33 is repealed.

6 **SECTION 2.** Section 2 of S.L. 2011-395 is repealed.

7 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 105-160.3(11) is repealed.

8 **SECTION 4.** Article 9 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
9 adding a new Part to read:

10 "Part 1H. Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities.

11 "§ 115C-112.2. Definitions.

12 The following definitions apply in this Part:

13 (1) Authority. – The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority.

14 (2) Eligible student. – A child with a disability under the age of 22 who meets
15 all of the following criteria:

16 a. Requires an individualized education plan.

17 b. Receives special education or related services on a daily basis.

18 c. Has not been placed in a nonpublic school or facility by a public
19 agency at public expense.

20 d. Has not spent any time enrolled in a postsecondary institution as a
21 full-time student taking at least 12 hours of academic credit.

22 e. Has not received a high school diploma.

23 f. Meets at least one of the following requirements:

24 1. Was enrolled in a North Carolina public school during the
25 previous semester.

26 2. Received special education or related services through the
27 North Carolina public schools as a preschool child with a
28 disability during the previous semester.

29 3. Received a scholarship grant for the previous semester.

30 4. Is eligible for initial enrollment in kindergarten or the first
31 grade in a North Carolina public school.

32 (3) Nonpublic school. – A school that meets the requirements of Part 1, 2, or 3
33 of Article 39 of this Chapter as identified by the Division of Nonpublic
34 Education, Department of Administration.

35 (4) Scholarship grants. – Grants awarded by the Authority to eligible students.



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"§ 115C-112.3. Scholarship Grants.

(a) The Authority shall make available no later than May 1 annually applications to eligible students for the award of scholarship grants to attend any nonpublic school and to receive special education and related services in a nonpublic school setting. Information about scholarship grants and the application process shall be made available on the Authority's Web site. The Authority shall give priority in awarding scholarship grants to eligible students who received a scholarship grant during the previous semester. Except as otherwise provided by the Authority for prior scholarship grant recipients, scholarship grants shall be awarded to eligible students in the order in which the applications are received.

(b) Scholarship grants awarded to eligible students shall be for amounts of not more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000) per semester per eligible student. Scholarship grants shall be awarded only for the reimbursement of tuition and special education and related services, including those services provided to home schooled students. The Authority shall notify parents in writing of their eligibility to receive scholarship grants for costs that will be incurred during the spring semester of the following year by December 1 and for costs incurred during the fall semester of that year by July 1. Following the conclusion of each school semester, the parent of an eligible student shall submit to the Authority any receipts or other documentation approved by the Authority to demonstrate the costs incurred during the semester. The Authority shall award a scholarship grant in the amount of costs demonstrated by the parent up to the maximum amount. If the costs incurred by the parent do not meet the maximum amount, the Authority shall use the remainder of those funds for the award of scholarship grants to eligible students for the following semester. The Authority shall award scholarship grants to the parents of eligible students at least semiannually.

(c) After an eligible student's initial receipt of a scholarship grant, the Authority shall ensure that the student is reevaluated at least every three years by the local educational agency in order to verify that the student continues to be a child with a disability.

(d) The Authority shall establish rules and regulations for the administration and awarding of scholarship grants.

"§ 115C-112.4. Verification of eligibility.

(a) The Authority may seek verification of information on any application for scholarship grants from eligible students. If a parent fails to cooperate with verification efforts, the Authority shall revoke the award of the scholarship grant to the eligible student.

(b) Parents of applicants for scholarship grants shall authorize the Authority to access any information held by the local educational agency that is needed for verification efforts.

"§ 115C-112.5. Authority reporting requirements.

(a) The Authority shall report to the Department of Public Instruction annually, no later than July 1, on the number of students who (i) received scholarship grants for the previous school year and (ii) were enrolled in a local school administrative unit for the semester prior to the semester for which a scholarship grant was awarded. The Department of Public Instruction shall adjust the allotments of local school administrative units based on the number of students awarded a scholarship grant who attended a local school administrative unit during the semester prior to the semester for which the scholarship grant was awarded. The amount of the adjustment shall equal the average per pupil allocation for average daily membership from the local school administrative unit.

(b) The Authority shall report annually, no later than March 1, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the following:

- (1) Total number, age, and grade level of eligible students receiving scholarship grants.
- (2) Total amount of scholarship grant funding awarded.
- (3) Nonpublic schools in which scholarship grant recipients are enrolled and the number of scholarship grant students at that school.

1 (4) The type of special education or related services for which scholarship
2 grants were awarded."

3 **SECTION 5.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North Carolina
4 State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) the sum of three million six hundred seventy
5 thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,670,500) for the 2013-2014 fiscal year and the sum of four
6 million three hundred forty-one thousand dollars (\$4,341,000) for the 2014-2015 fiscal year in
7 recurring funds to implement the requirements of this act. Of the funds appropriated to
8 NCSEAA under this section, NCSEAA shall use the sum of three million dollars (\$3,000,000)
9 for fiscal year 2013-2014 and the sum of three million dollars (\$3,000,000) for fiscal year
10 2014-2015 to award scholarship grants to eligible students. Any unexpended funds for this
11 purpose shall not revert at the end of each fiscal year but shall remain available to award
12 scholarship grants to eligible students.

13 The remainder of the funds, up to six hundred seventy thousand five hundred dollars
14 (\$670,500) for fiscal year 2013-2014 and up to one million three hundred and forty-one
15 thousand dollars (\$1,341,000) for fiscal year 2014-2015 shall be transferred to the North
16 Carolina Department of Public Instruction to conduct reevaluations of eligible students as
17 required by G.S. 115C-112.3(c), as enacted by this act.

18 **SECTION 5.(b)** Of the funds appropriated to NCSEAA to be used for the award of
19 scholarship grants to eligible students under subsection (a) of this section, NCSEAA may retain
20 up to one percent (1%) annually for administrative costs associated with the scholarship grant
21 program.

22 **SECTION 5.(c)** Nothing in this act shall require the General Assembly to
23 appropriate funds to implement it.

24 **SECTION 6.(a)** Article 32D of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is repealed.

25 **SECTION 6.(b)** The State Controller shall transfer the fund balance from the Fund
26 for Special Education and Related Services to Nontax Budget Code 19978 (Intra State
27 Transfers) or the appropriate budget code as determined by the State Controller to support
28 General Fund Appropriations for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

29 **SECTION 7.** Notwithstanding the definition for "eligible student" set forth in
30 G.S. 115C-112.2, as enacted by this act, an eligible dependent child of a taxpayer who received
31 an Education Expenses tax credit under G.S. 105-151.33 for the fall semester of the 2013-2014
32 school year is deemed to have met the requirements of G.S. 115C-112.2(2)f., as enacted by this
33 act, for the purposes of eligibility for a scholarship grant for the spring semester of the
34 2013-2014 school year.

35 **SECTION 8.** Sections 1, 2, and 3 of this act are effective for taxable years
36 beginning on or after January 1, 2014. This act does not affect the rights or liabilities of the
37 State, a taxpayer, or another person arising under a statute amended or repealed by this act
38 before the effective date of its amendment or repeal; nor does it affect the right to any refund or
39 credit of a tax that accrued under the amended or repealed statute before the effective date of its
40 amendment or repeal. Sections 5 and 6 of this act are effective July 1, 2013. The remainder of
41 this act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the spring semester of the
42 2013-2014 school year. Notwithstanding the requirement to make applications available by
43 May 1 in G.S. 115C-112.3(a), as enacted by this act, applications for the 2014 spring semester
44 shall be made available no later than October 1, 2013.