



HOUSE BILL 15: Educ. Software/SWD Tuition

2015-2016 General Assembly

Committee:	House Appropriations	Date:	September 29, 2015
Introduced by:	Reps. Pendleton, Stam, Yarborough	Prepared by:	Kara McCraw
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Committee Counsel

SUMMARY: *The 2nd Edition for HB 15 would and make the following changes:*

- *Authorize the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to use appropriated funds to enter into a statewide cooperative purchasing agreement to provide office productivity software for public schools and to provide technical support and professional development on the use of the software.*
- *Establish the Office of Principal Preparation in the State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) to administer a competitive grant program for principal preparation programs.*
- *Authorize the SEAA to disburse tuition funds for scholarships for students with disabilities through scholarship endorsements of funds directly to schools or through reimbursements to parents for tuition paid.*
- *Require access to and waive fees to the extent funds are available for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics and School for the Arts.*

CURRENT LAW: S.L. 2015-241, Sec. 11.11.(a) modifies the process for distribution of tuition for scholarships for students with disabilities to allow the State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) to remit twice a year the tuition scholarship funds for endorsement by the student's parent or guardian for deposit into the account of the school.

S.L. 2015-241, Sec. 11.9 creates a competitive grant program for principal preparation programs administered by the SEAA through a cooperative agreement with a private, nonprofit corporation.

G.S. 115C-174.26 requires access to and provides that, to the extent funds are available, students enrolled in public schools shall be exempt from paying any fees for administration of examinations for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1: Would authorize DPI to use funds appropriated for the 2015-16 fiscal year and subsequent fiscal years to:

- Enter into a statewide cooperative purchasing agreement to provide office productivity software for students, teachers, and other staff of North Carolina public schools, including charter schools.
- Provide technical support and professional development on the use of the software.

Section 1.5: Would eliminate the role of a private nonprofit corporation in the principal preparation grant program administered by the SEAA, and instead create an Office of Principal Preparation to do the following:

- Make recommendations to the SEAA for the award of grants.
- Develop and oversee the selection criteria, process, outreach efforts, renewal, continuation, and reporting criteria.

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- Build a portfolio of approved technical assistance providers to grantees.
- Work with the educational community across NC to successfully implement the programs.

The SEAA would be authorized to hire a director and Office staff meeting certain criteria and employees of the Office who voluntarily relinquish certain claims would be exempt from certain employment laws.

The section would make adjustments to deadlines in the provision and authorize flexibility in the timeline for implementation. The section would also allocate \$475,000 of the funding allocated to the SEAA to the Office of Principal Preparation and \$25,000 to the SEAA.

Section 2: Would amend the process for tuition endorsements and reimbursements for scholarships for students with disabilities in one of two ways based on the criteria satisfied by the school.

- Scholarship endorsement for tuition. – The SEAA would remit scholarship funds for endorsement by the student's parent or guardian at least twice a year for tuition to attend a nonpublic school that meets the criteria to receive funds for Opportunity Scholarships. The scholarship funds would be restrictively endorsed for deposit into the account of the school.
- Reimbursement for tuition. – The SEAA would reimburse, no sooner than the midpoint of the semester, a parent or guardian for documented tuition paid for an eligible student who enrolls in one of the following:
 - A North Carolina public school other than the public school to which that student has been assigned in the local school administrative unit where the student is domiciled.
 - A nonpublic school that does not participate in the Opportunity Scholarship program.

An enrollment of less than 75 days of the semester will be subject to a pro rata reimbursement.

Section 2.5: Would require access to and waiver of fees for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics and School for the Arts to the extent funds are available.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The PCS for HB 15 would become effective July 1, 2015. Section 2 would apply to scholarships awarded for the 2015-2016 school year and each subsequent school year.