



2017-2018 General Assembly

SENATE BILL 99: Appropriations Act of 2018, Sec. 10A.1: Modify and Align the K-12 Scholarship Programs

Committee:
Introduced by:
Analysis of: Sec. 10A.1 of S.L. 2018-5

Date: August 13, 2018
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Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *Sec. 10A.1 of S.L. 2018-5 makes several changes to the various K-12 scholarship programs (Special Education Scholarships, Opportunity Scholarships, and Personal Education Savings Accounts).*

This section makes the following changes to the Special Education Scholarships:

- *Prohibits the State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) from counting actual days of attendance to determine whether a child was enrolled in a qualifying school for the previous semester for the purposes of eligibility. A student who becomes eligible for a scholarship in the 2018-2019 school year solely due to this prohibition must receive priority in award of scholarships over all applicants except those previously awarded scholarships.*
- *Expands eligibility to include children in foster care or those who have been adopted within one year prior to the submission of the application, and gives those students a second-level priority behind students who received a scholarship during the previous school year.*
- *Requires SEAA to make applications available not later than February 1 annually.*
- *Requires SEAA to award scholarships according to priority criteria by March 15 each year.*
- *Removes the requirement that scholarships be awarded in the order in which applications are received.*
- *Authorizes an applicant to demonstrate disability status through a continuing verification form provided by a private psychologist or psychiatrist, if the initial determination was made by a local education agency.*
- *Authorizes a lottery for the selection of scholarship recipients within the established criteria.*

This section makes the following changes to the personal education savings accounts (PESAs):

- *Authorizes PESA funds to be distributed through either a debit card or an electronic account.*
- *Authorizes an applicant to demonstrate disability status through a continuing verification form provided by a private psychologist or psychiatrist, if the initial determination was made by a local education agency.*

Additionally, the SEAA annual report for each of these scholarship programs is now due by October 15.

This section became effective July 1, 2018. The prohibition on counting previous semester days of attendance applies to any student who was otherwise eligible to receive a special education scholarship

Karen Cochrane-Brown
Director



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on or after January 1, 2017, for any scholarship application for the 2018-2019 school year or later. The other eligibility modifications related to special education scholarships apply beginning with scholarship applications for the 2019-2020 school year. The PESA funds and eligibility changes apply beginning with the award of scholarship funds for the 2018-2019 school year.