



HOUSE BILL 53: Educational Changes for Military-Connected Students.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	February 11, 2022
Introduced by:		Prepared by:	Brian Gwyn*
Analysis of:	S.L. 2021-9		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *S.L. 2021-9 makes the following changes:*

- *Authorizes students of active-duty military parents not domiciled in the State to attend school in the State if the student resides with caregiver adult domiciled in the State as a result of the student's inability to physically reside with their parent due to military orders.*
- *Allows high school students who are eligible for in-state tuition at the time of application due to their status as dependents of military personnel to retain that status upon enrollment, even if the parent has been reassigned to another state incident to active military duty.*
- *Allows high school students who are eligible for the Need-Based Scholarship for Students Attending Private Institutions of Higher Education (need-based scholarships) at the time of application due to their status as dependents of military personnel to retain that status upon enrollment, even if the parent has been reassigned to another state incident to active military duty.*

This act became effective April 9, 2021. Please see the full summary for more detail on applicability.

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZE STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN A LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT FOR CHILDREN OF ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY DUE TO THE MILITARY ORDERS OF THE PARENT

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-366 establishes the requirements for assignment of a student to local school administrative units (LEAs). Generally, a student must be domiciled in a local school administrative unit to attend its public schools free of tuition. A minor's domicile is the same as the minor's parent or legal guardian (parent). However, there are a number of exceptions. One of the exceptions is when that student resides with a caregiver adult who is domiciled in the LEA because the student's parent is on active military duty and is deployed outside of the LEA in which the student resides. Affidavits and evidence of the deployment must be provided to the local board of education.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 1 replaces the current exception for enrollment of students whose parent is on active military duty with a new exception. This exception authorizes enrollment of a non-domiciled student living with a caregiver adult domiciled in the LEA if the following apply:

- The parent is on active military duty.
- The commanding officer of the parent provides a signed letter that the parent's military orders prevent the parent from physically residing with the student, and includes the time period the military orders will be in effect. Active military duty would not include period of active-duty for training of less than 30 days.
- The signed letter is submitted with the required affidavits.

Section 1 also clarifies that legal guardianship by the caregiver adult is not a requirement for enrollment.

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Additionally, Section 1 clarifies that a student is eligible to register to attend school in an LEA if the student resides in the LEA with a parent on active military duty assigned to a military installation or reservation in the State, even if the parent is not domiciled in the State.

Section 1 became effective April 9, 2021 and applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

SECTION 2: CLARIFY CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT FOR MILITARY DEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONCE ADMITTED TO A STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 116-143.1 requires that an individual reside in the State for 12 months to qualify for in-state tuition at a constituent institution or community college of the State (institution of higher education). G.S. 116-143.4 provides an exception to this requirement for members of the Armed Forces abiding in the State incident to active military duty and their dependent relatives who reside with them, and grants them in-state tuition without meeting the 12 month residency requirement. The benefit is retained by the dependent even after the member is reassigned outside of the State or retires, as long as the dependent remains continuously enrolled in the degree or program.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 2 qualifies a dependent relative of a member of the Armed Forces for in-state tuition after the member is reassigned outside of the State incident to active military duty if all of the following criteria are met:

- While the member of the Armed Forces is assigned in North Carolina, the dependent relative applies for admission to the institution of higher education while enrolled in a North Carolina high school.
- The member is reassigned outside of North Carolina before the student enrolls in the institution of higher education.
- Upon admission, the dependent relative enrolls no later than the fall semester following the notice of admission and remains continuously enrolled.

Section 2 became effective April 9, 2021 and applies to students admitted for the fall academic semester of 2021 and thereafter.

SECTION 2.5. CLARIFY CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY FOR MILITARY DEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CURRENT LAW: Students meeting certain qualifications who attend private institutions of higher education in the State qualify for annual need-based scholarships from the State. One qualification relates to residency, and requires the student to either be a North Carolina legal resident for tuition purposes, a veteran or dependent relative of the veteran abiding in the State with intent to establish residency, or an active-duty member of the Armed Forces or dependent relative abiding in the State incident to active military duty.

BILL ANALYSIS: Sec. 2.5 provides that a dependent relative of an active-duty member of the Armed Forces will remain eligible for the need-based scholarship if the active-duty member of the Armed Forces is reassigned outside of the State, if all of the following criteria are met:

- At the time the dependent relative applied for admission to an eligible private postsecondary institution, the dependent relative was enrolled in a North Carolina high school.
- Upon admission to the eligible private postsecondary institution, the student enrolls no later than the fall semester following admission and remains continuously enrolled.

Section 2.5 applies beginning with the award of scholarships for the 2021-2022 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, this act became effective April 9, 2021.