



2021-2022 General Assembly

# SENATE BILL 105: 2021 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.69: Permanent Charter School Transportation Grant Program

<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	February 23, 2022
<b>Introduced by:</b>		<b>Prepared by:</b>	Samantha Yarborough Staff Attorney
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Sec. 7.69 of S.L. 2021-180		

**OVERVIEW:** Section 7.69 of S.L. 2021-180 establishes the Charter School Transportation Grant Program (Program). The Program will award grant funds to charter schools meeting eligibility requirements to reimburse up to 65% of the eligible student transportation costs incurred by the school for transportation fuel, vehicle maintenance, contracted transportation services, and transportation personnel salaries. A charter school is eligible for the Program if at least 50% of the students enrolled reside in households with an income level not exceeding the amount required for a student to qualify for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program.

By August 1 of each year, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must establish the criteria and guidelines for the grant application process for the upcoming school year, including any documentation required to be submitted with the application. Each school year, DPI must accept applications (i) until December 31 for eligible costs incurred during the fall semester of the school year and (ii) until May 15 for eligible costs incurred during the spring semester of the school year. For charter schools selected for reimbursement of fall semester costs, DPI must award grant funds by February 15. For charter schools selected for reimbursement of spring semester costs, DPI must award grant funds by June 15. The total amount of each grant awarded under the Program must not exceed \$100,000 per charter school per school year.

No later than March 15 of each year in which funds are awarded under the Program, DPI must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and various other entities on the administration of the Program, including at least the following information:

- The number of charter schools that received grant funds.
- The amount of grant funds awarded to those charter schools.
- Whether implementing the Program has led to an increase in charter schools offering lunch.
- Whether implementing the Program has led to an increase in student lunch participation at charter schools offering lunch.
- Whether implementing the Program has increased or expanded the offering of student transportation by charter schools.
- The modes of student transportation offered by charter schools that received grant funds.

The following modifications to the Program timeline apply to the 2021-2022 school year:

- DPI must establish criteria and guidelines for the grant application process by January 15, 2022.

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- *DPI must accept applications until February 15, 2022, for costs incurred during the fall semester.*
- *DPI must award grant funds to the charter schools selected for reimbursement of fall semester costs by March 31, 2022.*
- *DPI must submit its first report by no later than April 15, 2022.*

*This section became effective July 1, 2021, and applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.*