

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Buesgens

Subject: Providing general education access grants for students' school costs

Analyst: Lisa Larson, 651-296-8036

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Overview

Proposes to make available education access grants for the tuition and fees that qualified students must pay to attend an accredited or commissioner-recognized school in the Minneapolis or St. Paul school district.

Section

1 General education access grants.

Subd. 1. Enrollment. (a) Makes a student enrolled in an accredited or commissioner-recognized elementary or secondary school eligible for a general education access grant if: (1) the student's household does not exceed 250 percent of federal poverty guidelines; (2) the student resides and is enrolled in the Minneapolis or St. Paul school district; and (3) the commissioner approves the student's grant application.

(b) Requires the commissioner, subject to paragraphs (c) and (d), to combine and decide on properly submitted applications by March 1 for the next school year and to decide on subsequent applications in the order they are received. Requires the commissioner to provide grant applicants written notice of the commissioner's decision.

(c) Limits the number of approved applications for resident students in fiscal year 2006 to 10 percent of the district's student enrollment in fiscal year 2005. Requires the commissioner to select grant applicants by lot if the number of applicants exceeds

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the limit established in this paragraph.

(d) Limits the number of approved applications for resident students in fiscal years 2007 through 2011 to a 5 percent increase over the preceding fiscal year. Exempts currently approved grant recipients from the selection by lot. Requires the commissioner to select grant applicants by lot if the number of applicants exceeds the limit established in this paragraph. Removes the limit on the number of approved applications for resident students in fiscal year 2012.

Subd. 2. Funding. (a) Requires the commissioner at least quarterly to transmit to the parent or guardian of an approved student applicant a check for the parent or guardian to restrictively endorse for the school providing instruction to the student. Declares that the access grant payments represent financial assistance to the parent or guardian who is primarily responsible for ensuring that the student receives instruction required by the state's compulsory attendance law.

(b) Limits the total amount of the access grant to the tuition and fees charged by the school in which the student is enrolled or the formula allowance, whichever is less. Directs the commissioner to recognize only those tuition and fee charges that do not exceed those charged to students who do not receive access grants.

(c) Requires the commissioner to obtain from a student's parent or guardian information about the student's school costs and enrollment before making payments. Directs the commissioner to prorate payments for students enrolled only part of a school year.

(d) Directs the commissioner to withhold payments when the commissioner believes information about the student's school costs and enrollment is intentionally false. Directs the commissioner adopt guidelines for auditing and verifying school costs and enrollment information.

(e) Allows school districts to include all, two-thirds and then one-third of resident students receiving access grants in the total pupil count for the first three fiscal years for purposes of calculating general education and other revenue. Directs the commissioner to reduce a district's state aid payments by the amount of access grant payments that resident students receive.

Subd. 3. Assessment. Requires students receiving access grants to take the same statewide tests that public school students take. Directs the commissioner to determine the time and location for administering the tests. Requires students' test results to be reported to the student's parent or guardian and the enrolling school. Requires someone to report aggregate results to the public.

Subd. 4. Conference. Directs the commissioner to offer an informal conference to resolve the disputes of applicants and recipients adversely affected by an agency action.

2 Annual general education aid appropriation. Appropriates to the department the amount

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needed for general education access grants.