



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, Fiscal Research Division, and Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee

Charter School Transportation Grant Program

SL 2021-180, sec. 7.69(b) (SB 105)

amending § 115C-218.42

Date Due: April 15, 2022
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2021-2022

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Catherine Truitt, State Superintendent :: 301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

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Background

PERMANENT CHARTER SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAM

Senate Bill 105, Session Law 2021-80, amended Article 14A of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-218.42. Charter School Transportation Grant Program.

- (a) Purpose; Definition. – There is established the Charter School Transportation Grant Program (Program). The purpose of the Program shall be to award grant funds to a charter school that meets the requirements of subsection (b) of this section for the reimbursement of up to sixty-five percent (65%) of the eligible student transportation costs incurred by the school in accordance with the provisions of this section. For purposes of this section, the term "eligible student transportation costs" means costs incurred by the charter school for (i) transportation fuel, (ii) vehicle maintenance, (iii) contracted transportation services, and (iv) transportation personnel salaries.
- (b) Program Eligibility. – If a charter school has student enrollment in a semester of the school year of at least fifty percent (50%) of its students residing in households with an income level not in excess of the amount required for a student to qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program, the charter school may apply to the Department for grant funds under the Program for reimbursement of up to sixty-five percent (65%) of the eligible student transportation costs incurred by the school for that semester.
- (c) Applications. – By August 1 of each year, the Department shall 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, the Department shall accept applications until December 31 for eligible student transportation costs incurred during the fall semester of the school year and until May 15 for eligible student transportation costs incurred during the spring semester of the school year.
- (d) Award of Funds. – From funds made available for the Program, the Department shall award grant funds to the selected charter schools by February 15 for eligible student transportation costs incurred during the fall semester of the same school year and by June 15 for eligible student transportation costs incurred during the spring semester of the prior school year. The total amount of each grant awarded under the Program shall not exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per charter school per school year.
- (e) Reporting. – No later than March 15 of each year in which funds are awarded under the Program, the Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee, the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Fiscal Research Division on the administration of the Program, including at least the following information: (1) The number of charter schools that received grant funds. Senate Bill 105 Session Law 2021-180

Page 99 (2) The amount of grant funds awarded to those charter schools. (3) Whether implementing the Program has led to an increase in charter schools offering lunch. (4) Whether implementing the Program has led to an increase in student lunch participation at charter schools offering lunch. (5) Whether implementing the Program has increased or expanded the offering of student transportation by charter schools. (6) The modes of student transportation offered by charter schools that received grant funds."

“SECTION 7.69.(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-218.42, as enacted by this act, for the 2021-2022 school year, the following modifications shall apply to the time line for the Charter School Transportation Grant Program:

(1) The Department shall establish criteria and guidelines for the grant application process by January 15, 2022.

(2) The Department shall accept applications until February 15, 2022, for eligible student transportation costs incurred during the fall semester.

(3) The Department shall award grant funds to the selected charter schools by March 31, 2022, for eligible student transportation costs incurred during the fall semester.

(4) The Department shall submit its report pursuant to G.S. 115C-218.42(e) no later than April 15, 2022.

SECTION 7.69.(c) This section is effective July 1, 2021, and applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

This report fulfills the April 15, 2022 report requirement referenced above.

Letter of Intent to Apply

On February 10, 2022, all charter schools received the following information and opportunity to submit a letter of intent to apply for the Charter School Transportation Grant Program.

LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAM

Two-and-a-half million dollars was provided to the NC Department of Public Instruction to establish a Charter School Transportation Grant Program. The purpose of the Charter School Transportation Grant program is to reimburse a charter school that has a student enrollment of at least fifty percent (50%) of its students residing in households with an income level not in excess of the amount required for a student to qualify for the federal free or reduced price lunch program.

The total amount of each grant awarded under the Program will reimburse sixty-five percent (65%) of eligible transportation cost and shall not exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

Eligible “student transportation costs” for reimbursement include costs incurred by the charter school in a semester for:

- (i) Transportation fuel;
- (ii) Vehicle maintenance;
- (iii) Contracted transportation services; and
- (iv) Transportation personnel salaries.

To determine the number of charter schools applying and eligible to receive the grant, a letter of intent is required. The information presented in your Letter of Intent will help NCDPI plan the grant dissemination. Please contact the Office of Charter Schools at ocs@dpi.nc.gov with questions. All information provided by the applicant will be public information. The Letter of Intent must be signed by an authorized agent, contain the required information, and be received by the Office of Charter Schools by the stated time and date to be accepted.

Please submit the completed Letter of Intent in Epicenter by **5:00 PM** on **February 28, 2022**. The attached template ***must*** be utilized by the potential applicant as the Letter of Intent. The grant application including criteria and guidelines will be released pending the Charter Schools Advisory Board review/recommendation and State Board of Education. A verification email will be sent to all schools that submit by February 28. If a verification email is not received by March 10 please contact ocs@dpi.nc.gov.

Following the February 28, 2022 deadline, 61 charter schools submitted letters of intent:

A.C.E. Academy (13C)
Alpha Academy (26B)
Arapahoe Charter School (69A)
Aristotle Preparatory Academy: A Challenge Foundation Academy (60N)
Asheville P.E.A.K Academy
Bethel Hill Charter (73A)
Carolina Charter Academy CFA (93Q)
Carter Community Charter School (32C)
Carter G. Woodson School (34D)
Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School (92R)
Central Park School for Children (32K)
Central Wake Charter High School (93L)
Charlotte Lab School (61M)
CIS Academy (78A)
Classical Charter Schools of Whiteville (24N)
Classical Charter Schools of Wilmington (65C)
Commonwealth High School (60U)
Community Public Charter (36G)
Dillard Academy Charter School (96C)
East Voyager Academy of Charlotte (61W)

Eastside STREAM Academy (60P)
Emereau: Bladen (09B)
Faith Academy (80C)
Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington (65G)
Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School (93A)
Healthy Start Academy (32B)
Henderson Collegiate (91B)
Hobgood Charter School (42B)
Invest Collegiate Transform (60Q)
Kestrel Heights School (32D)
KIPP Charlotte (60L)
KIPP Durham College Preparatory (32S)
KIPP Gaston College Preparatory (66A)
KIPP Halifax College Preparatory (42A)
Lake Lure Classical Academy (81B)
Mallard Creek STEM Academy (61Q)
Maureen Joy Charter School (32A)
MINA Charter School of Lee County (53C)
Monroe Charter Academy (90D)
Movement Charter School (61T)
Movement School Eastland (62K)
Next Generation Academy (41M)
North East Carolina Preparatory (33A)
Old Main STREAM Academy Charter School
Paul R. Brown Leadership Academy (09A)
Phoenix Academy (41D)
Pocosin Innovative Charter (94A)
Reaching All Minds Academy (32Q)
Ridgeview Charter School (36F)
RISE SE Raleigh Charter School (93J)
Sallie B Howard School for the Arts and Education (98A)
Stewart Creek High School (61L)
Sugar Creek Charter (60B)
The Children's Village Academy (54A)
The College Preparatory and Leadership Academy of High Point (41H)
The Institute for the Development of Young Leaders (32P)
Triad Math and Science Academy (41F)
UpROAR Leadership Academy (61U)
Uwharrie Charter Academy (76A)
VERITAS Community School: A Challenge Foundation Academy (61P)
Wilmington School of the Arts (65H)

Next Steps

Per statute, by August 1 of the fall semester, the Department shall 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.

The Office of Charter schools has reviewed letters of intent and found that 47 of the 61 schools are eligible for funding.