May 9, 2007

H 2042. TUITION GRANT FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS. Filed 5/9/07. *TO ESTABLISH A LEGISLATIVE TUITION GRANT PROGRAM FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS*.

Enacts new GS 115C-567.1 establishing a Legislative Tuition Grant Program for Private School Students (program) in the Department of Administration (DOA) to be administered by the Division of Nonpublic Education in the DOA. Provides that the purpose of the program is to provide tuition grants to public school-aged children who attend participating private schools. Defines *participating private school* to mean a private church school, a school of religious charter, or a qualified nonpublic school that elects to participate in the program. Directs that the program is to be phased in beginning with the 2007-08 kindergarten class and subsequent kindergarten classes. Defines an *eligible student* as one who enters kindergarten in the 2007-08 school year or a subsequent school year and is eligible to attend a public school in NC. Provides a tuition grant of $1,800 per year for each year an eligible students attends a participating private school. Prohibits a participating school from refunding, rebating, or sharing the tuition grant with the parent, guardian, or student. Provides additional information and guidelines regarding (1) admission to participating schools, (2) the responsibilities of participating schools, (3) the autonomy of participating schools, (4) the responsibilities of DOA, and (5) the disqualification of participating schools. Directs DOA to adopt rules and procedures as necessary to administer the program. Requires local school administrative units to provide participating schools that have admitted students who are eligible under the program with a complete copy of the students' school records while complying with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

Provides that the Legislative Services Commission may use nonpublic funds to contract with qualified researchers who have experience evaluating school choice programs to conduct a study of the program. Specifies components of the program to be assessed and guidelines regarding the types of methodologies to be employed by the researchers in conducting the study. Requires that the study cover a period of 13 years. Provides that the General Assembly may require periodic reports from the researchers.

Appropriates $22,180,062 for 2007-08 and $44,778,503 for 2008-09 from the General Fund to the Department of Administration to implement the act.

Intro. by Allred. GS 115C, STUDY, APPROP