



S.B. 89

124th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Sens. Amstutz, Jordan, Hottinger, Wachtmann, Jacobson

BILL SUMMARY

- Increases the maximum scholarship amount for a school voucher from \$2,500 to the amount the General Assembly determines to be the base cost per pupil of an adequate education (\$4,814 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2001).
- Increases the state share of the cost of a school voucher to 100% (from 75% or 90%) for a student who uses a school voucher at an alternative public school.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Background

The Pilot Project Scholarship Program, commonly called the "voucher" program, operates only in the Cleveland City School District. The program provides for a number of students residing in the district to receive scholarships to attend alternative schools and an equal number of students to receive tutorial assistance grants while attending public school in the district. Preference for the scholarships is required to be given to students from families with low income.

For purposes of the voucher program, an "alternative school" is a registered private school located in the school district or a public school located in an adjacent school district. Tutorial assistance consists of instructional services that are provided outside regular school hours and are approved by the Commission on School Choice.

Except in the case of a handicapped student, the amount of a basic scholarship may not exceed the lesser of (1) the tuition charged by the alternative school or (2) an amount established by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction that does not exceed \$2,500. The Superintendent is required to

increase this amount in the case of a mainstreamed handicapped student and to increase the amount further in the case of a separately educated handicapped student. The amount of a tutorial assistance grant may not exceed the lesser of (1) the provider's actual charges for the assistance or (2) 20% of the average scholarship amount.

The bill

The bill increases the maximum basic scholarship amount from \$2,500 to the formula amount established for other school districts. The formula amount is the same as that which the General Assembly has determined to be base cost per pupil of an adequate education--\$4,814 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2001. At present the State Superintendent is required by November 1 each year to "estimate" the per-pupil scholarship amounts for the ensuing school year. The bill requires, instead, that the State Superintendent "announce" these amounts by November 1 each year.

Also at present, a student qualifies for a 75% scholarship amount if the family income of the student is at or above 200% of the maximum income level established by the State Superintendent for low-income families. A student qualifies for a 90% scholarship amount if the family income is below 200% of the maximum income level. The 75% or 90% comes from state funds; the remaining 25% or 10% is required to be furnished by a political subdivision, a private nonprofit or for-profit entity, or another person. Under the bill a student who uses his or her scholarship at an alternative public school qualifies for a 100% scholarship amount. A student who uses his or her scholarship at an alternative registered private school instead continues, under the bill, to qualify for a 75% or 90% scholarship amount, depending upon whether the family income is below or above 200% of the maximum income level.

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE	JOURNAL ENTRY
Introduced	04-04-01	p. 273

S0089-I.124/jc