

HOUSE BILL 266

F1

11r0441

(PRE-FILED)

By: **Delegate Cox**

Requested: July 15, 2020

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2021

Assigned to: Ways and Means and Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Student Education Equity Grant Program – Established**
3 **(Student Education Equity in Funding Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Student Education Equity Grant Program in the State
5 Department of Education; establishing the purpose of the Program; authorizing
6 certain students to apply to the Department to receive a grant from the Program to
7 be used for certain expenses; providing for the renewal of a grant from the Program
8 if certain conditions are met; requiring the Department to establish an application
9 process for the Program and to review applications in a timely manner; requiring the
10 Department to distribute grants, enter into certain agreements under certain
11 circumstances, and provide certain information to each student who receives a grant;
12 requiring each student who receives a grant to provide certain receipts to the
13 Department; requiring the Department to use certain funds in providing grants
14 under the Program; authorizing the Department to adopt certain regulations;
15 prohibiting the Department from adopting certain regulations; defining certain
16 terms; and generally relating to the Student Education Equity Grant Program.

17 BY adding to
18 Article – Education
19 Section 5–222
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
23 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

24 **Article – Education**
25 **5–222.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
2 **INDICATED.**

3 **(2) “ELIGIBLE EXPENSES” MEANS EXPENSES INCURRED BY A**
4 **STUDENT TO ATTEND AN OPEN SCHOOL IN THE STATE, INCLUDING:**

5 **(I) TUITION AND FEES;**

6 **(II) TEXTBOOKS OR UNIFORMS;**

7 **(III) FEES FOR SPECIAL INSTRUCTION OR SPECIAL SERVICES**
8 **PROVIDED TO THE ELIGIBLE STUDENT;**

9 **(IV) COMPUTER HARDWARE AND COMPUTER SOFTWARE**
10 **ASSOCIATED WITH INSTRUCTION OR OTHER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES; AND**

11 **(V) ANY ADDITIONAL EXPENSES APPROVED BY THE**
12 **DEPARTMENT.**

13 **(3) “ELIGIBLE STUDENT” MEANS A STUDENT WHO IS UNABLE TO**
14 **ATTEND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO ATTEND BY THE LOCAL**
15 **SCHOOL SYSTEM BECAUSE THE SCHOOL IS NOT OPEN.**

16 **(4) “OPEN” MEANS, AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION:**

17 **(I) THE SCHOOL IS OFFERING FULLY IN-PERSON LEARNING**
18 **FOR ALL CLASSES IN THE SCHOOL; AND**

19 **(II) THE SCHOOL HAS NOT RESTRICTED ANY IN-PERSON**
20 **SCHOOL SPORTS OR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.**

21 **(5) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE STUDENT EDUCATION EQUITY GRANT**
22 **PROGRAM.**

23 **(B) (1) THERE IS A STUDENT EDUCATION EQUITY GRANT PROGRAM IN**
24 **THE DEPARTMENT.**

25 **(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO**
26 **ELIGIBLE STUDENTS IN THE STATE TO ATTEND AN OPEN PUBLIC OR NONPUBLIC**
27 **SCHOOL APPROVED TO OPERATE IN THE STATE.**

1 **(C) (1) AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT MAY APPLY TO THE DEPARTMENT TO**
2 **RECEIVE A \$1,000 INITIAL GRANT FROM THE PROGRAM TO BE USED AT AN OPEN**
3 **PUBLIC OR NONPUBLIC SCHOOL DURING A FALL OR SPRING SEMESTER.**

4 **(2) IF A STUDENT RECEIVES A GRANT FOR THE FALL SEMESTER, THE**
5 **STUDENT IS AUTOMATICALLY ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A GRANT FOR THE SPRING**
6 **SEMESTER IF THE STUDENT SUBMITS DOCUMENTATION TO THE DEPARTMENT THAT**
7 **THE STUDENT:**

8 **(I) REMAINS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE SCHOOL THEY ARE**
9 **ASSIGNED TO ATTEND BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM BECAUSE THE SCHOOL IS NOT**
10 **OPEN;**

11 **(II) IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A SCHOOL THAT IS OPEN; AND**

12 **(III) USED THE INITIAL GRANT FOR ELIGIBLE EXPENSES.**

13 **(3) A STUDENT MUST REAPPLY TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT IN A**
14 **SCHOOL YEAR FOLLOWING THE SCHOOL YEAR IN WHICH THE STUDENT RECEIVED**
15 **THE INITIAL GRANT.**

16 **(D) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH AN APPLICATION PROCESS**
17 **TO VERIFY THAT A STUDENT IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE GRANT PROGRAM.**

18 **(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REVIEW APPLICATIONS IN A TIMELY**
19 **MANNER AND APPROVE APPLICATIONS IF THE STUDENT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS**
20 **OF AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT.**

21 **(E) (1) IF THE DEPARTMENT VERIFIES THAT A STUDENT IS AN ELIGIBLE**
22 **STUDENT, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DISTRIBUTE A \$1,000 GRANT TO THE ELIGIBLE**
23 **STUDENT FOR THE SEMESTER AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STUDENT.**

24 **(2) THE AGREEMENT SHALL SPECIFY THAT THE GRANT MAY BE USED**
25 **ONLY FOR ELIGIBLE EXPENSES.**

26 **(3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE TO EACH STUDENT WHO**
27 **RECEIVES A GRANT A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF:**

28 **(I) THE AUTHORIZED USES OF THE GRANT; AND**

29 **(II) THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT AND THE**
30 **DEPARTMENT UNDER THE PROGRAM.**

1 **(F) EACH STUDENT WHO RECEIVES A GRANT SHALL PROVIDE RECEIPTS TO**
2 **THE DEPARTMENT TO VERIFY THAT THE GRANT WAS USED ONLY FOR ELIGIBLE**
3 **EXPENSES.**

4 **(G) IN PROVIDING GRANTS, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL USE FUNDS**
5 **DISTRIBUTED TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM UNDER THE FOUNDATION PROGRAM**
6 **ESTABLISHED UNDER § 5-202 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

7 **(H) (1) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS ONLY TO:**

8 **(I) FURTHER DEFINE ELIGIBLE EXPENSES;**

9 **(II) ESTABLISH THE PROCESS FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS AND**
10 **RENEWALS; AND**

11 **(III) ESTABLISH THE PROCESS FOR DISTRIBUTING THE GRANTS,**
12 **INCLUDING REDIRECTING FOUNDATION PROGRAM FUNDING TO ELIGIBLE**
13 **STUDENTS.**

14 **(2) THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT ADOPT REGULATIONS TO:**

15 **(I) ALTER THE DEFINITION OF AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT; OR**

16 **(II) REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR GRANT**
17 **APPLICATIONS.**

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
19 1, 2021.