

The House Committee on K-12 Education approved on Tuesday several highly-debated bills, including one expanding the private school voucher program and another reshaping the process for establishing student discipline policies. Members rejected an amendment to [House Bill 32: Equity in Opportunity Act](#) that would have required some students who receive Opportunity Scholarships to take certain state assessments to evaluate the program’s effectiveness, but the bill ultimately gained approval, mostly down party lines. Committee members also approved [House Bill 247: Standards of Student Conduct](#) after rejecting an amendment which would have kept examples delineating student conduct that should not be deemed to be “serious violations” in the [current state law](#) on discipline policies. The North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) and other groups contacted lawmakers before the committee to share concerns regarding both bills, and will keep members updated on any progress. See below for additional information on these and other education bills the committee approved this week:

[HB 205: Abuse & Neglect Resources in Public Schools.](#)

- Requires public schools to provide students with age-appropriate information and resources on child abuse and neglect.
- **STATUS:** Passed House K-12 Education and House Rules Committees; passed on House floor; sent to Senate.

[HB 249: Children with Disabilities Funding Formula.](#)

- Directs the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to study and propose changes to the state funding formula for children with disabilities to a model that allocates funds based on severity of disability type; also appropriates approximately \$7.7 million for students with disabilities for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to provide LEAs with at least 13% of each LEA’s 2021-2022 allocated average daily membership.
- **STATUS:** Passed House K-12 Education; sent to House Appropriations Committee.

[HB 69: Education on the Holocaust and Genocide.](#)

- Requires the State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to review and implement federal guidelines regarding anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and Holocaust denial as part of the state’s K-12 curriculum.
- Appropriates \$250,000 to DPI in 2021-22 and again in 2022-23 to implement these requirements, to begin with the 2023-24 school year.
- **STATUS:** Passed House K-12 Education; sent to House Appropriations Committee.

[HB 32: Equity in Opportunity Act.](#)

- Changes the Opportunity Scholarship Program to extend eligibility to students who were already enrolled in a private school, while also increasing the cost of vouchers by 25 percent, bringing expected total state costs for the program to nearly \$160 million over the next nine years. Specifically, the bill would:
 - Establish the scholarship/voucher amount in relation to the State per pupil allocation. This would change the current \$4,200 annual award limit in 2022-23 to allow up to 70% of

the average state per-pupil allocation from the previous year. The current year's per-pupil average is \$6,586, so the new award limit would be \$4,610 if current funding does not change. The allowable award would increase in 2023-24 to reflect 80% of the average per-pupil allocation, or to \$5,259 if the current per-pupil average does not increase or decrease.

- Create a new reserve for the program.
 - Authorize the use of a nonprofit for family outreach.
 - Adjust the administrative funds allocated to the State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) that oversees the program.
 - Merge the Special Education Scholarships for Students with Disabilities and Personal Education Savings Accounts into the Personal Education Student Accounts for Children with Disabilities and increase awards up to \$17,000 per year for students with one or more of the following disabilities: autism, visual impairment, hearing impairment, moderate or severe intellectual or developmental disability, and/or multiple permanent orthopedic impairment.
 - Authorize counties to appropriate supplemental funds for students in that county receiving K-12 scholarships/vouchers and authorize initial funds to SEAA to establish the program.
- **STATUS:** Passed House K-12 Education Committee; sent to House Appropriations Committee.

[HB 247: Standards of Student Conduct.](#)

- Requires public school units to consult with “teachers, school-based administrators, parents, and local law enforcement agencies” in adopting their student codes of conduct and establishing discipline procedures.
- **STATUS:** Passed House K-12 Education; sent to House Rules Committee.

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