
Fwd: News Release: Senate Appropriations to Consider Bill to Eliminate Opportunity Scholarship Waitlist

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From: **Senator Berger Press** <bergerpress@ncleg.gov>

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To: <rfofaria@ednc.org>



PRESS RELEASE
President Pro Tempore
Senator Phil Berger

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Senator Berger Press](mailto:bergerpress@ncleg.gov)

April 30, 2024

**Senate Appropriations to Consider Bill to
Eliminate Opportunity Scholarship Waitlist**

Raleigh, N.C. – Following the unprecedented interest in the Opportunity Scholarship program, the Senate Appropriations Committee will consider a bill to eliminate the program's waitlist.

During the priority application period in February, about 72,000 new applications were received. So far, 13,511 families in Tier 1 — the lowest income tier — and nearly 2,300 families in Tier 2 were offered an Opportunity Scholarship.

Currently, it is estimated that more than 54,800 applicants are on the waitlist.

"North Carolina parents made it clear that they want educational freedom and choice," Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) said. **"The incredible interest in Opportunity Scholarships means thousands of families are now in limbo. We must clear the waitlist so families can prepare for the upcoming school year."**

Tomorrow, the Senate Appropriations Committee will consider a proposed committee substitute for [House Bill 823](#). To clear the waitlist, the PCS funds \$248 million nonrecurring for the upcoming school year and \$215.5 million recurring to support scholarships in the 2025-26 school year.

The bill will also include \$24.7 million recurring to clear the waitlist for the Education Student Accounts program, which supports students with disabilities. There are an estimated 2,015 applicants currently on the waitlist.

"Every child in North Carolina deserves the opportunity to attend a school that best fits their needs, no matter their family's zip code or income level," Sen. Michael Lee (R-New Hanover), chairman of the Senate Appropriations and Education committees, said. **"North Carolina's educational landscape is a stellar example of how you can adequately fund public schools and support school choice initiatives."**

The Senate Appropriations Committee will meet at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, in LOB 544 to consider the PCS.

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