K12 PROGRAMS: UPDATE FOR NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Legislative Changes to the OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP (effective for 2016-17)**

**Military Families:** Students who have attended a Department of Defense (DOD) school located in North Carolina for the previous spring semester will meet the public school eligibility requirement. Students who have a parent on full-time active military duty will not need to meet the public school eligibility requirement. The households of these students still need to be eligible in terms of income and the students must be residents of North Carolina.

**Cap on K/1 students:** The percentage of funds that may be used to award Opportunity Scholarships to eligible students entering kindergarten or first grade increases from 35% to 40%.

**Reserve Fund:** The Opportunity Scholarship now has additional funds set aside in a reserve fund for school year 2017-18. The additional funding in the recently passed budget is reserved for 2017-18. The existence of a reserve fund allows the Opportunity Scholarship to plan 2017-18 awards prior to the passing of the 2017 state budget.

**Legislative Changes to the DISABILITIES GRANT (effective for 2016-17)**

**Military Families:** Students who have attended a Department of Defense (DOD) school located in North Carolina for the previous spring semester will meet the public school eligibility requirement. Students who have a parent on full-time active military duty will not need to meet the public school eligibility requirement. All students must provide a public school IEP as documentation of a disability and the students must be residents of North Carolina.

**Eligibility Changes:** Students who have lived in North Carolina at least six months, even if they have not attended a North Carolina public school, may now be eligible for a Disabilities Grant. The priority of awards to students is as follows: (1) renewal students; (2) students entering kindergarten or first grade, students who have attended a North Carolina public school the previous spring semester, students who have attended a DOD school or who have a parent on full-time active military duty; and (3) students who have lived in North Carolina at least 6 months. This eligibility change only affects the Disabilities Grant.

**Reimbursement to Parents for Tuition:** A nonpublic school can choose to participate in the K-12 Programs (Opportunity / Disabilities). Schools which participate agree to program requirements and receive funds directly from SEAA on behalf of student recipients. For the Disabilities Grant, a nonpublic school can choose not to participate and the parents of student grant recipients can seek reimbursement for their expenses. For the parents to receive a reimbursement for tuition, the school must be registered with DNPE and choose not to be registered with SEAA.

**$4,000 maximum per semester:** The Disabilities Grant maximum per semester increase (from $3,000 to $4,000) is funded for 2016-17.

**Continuing Eligibility:** The continuing eligibility assessment can be performed by a psychiatrist as well as a psychologist with a school psychology focus. Whether a psychiatrist or a psychologist, this person must be licensed in North Carolina.

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**Opportunity Scholarship Program**
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