WEST virginia legislature

2023 regular session

Introduced

House Bill 2797

By Delegates Statler, Foster, Espinosa, Kimble, Crouse and Ridenour

[Introduced January 18, 2023; Referred to the Committee on Education]

A BILL to amend and reenact §18-31-7 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to the Hope Scholarship Program; and providing that microschool tuition and fees are qualifying expenses for Hope Scholarship accounts.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 31. HOPE SChOLARSHIP PROGRAM

§18-31-7. Qualifying expenses for Hope Scholarship accounts.

(a) Parents of a Hope Scholarship student shall agree to use the funds deposited in their student’s Hope Scholarship account only for the following qualifying expenses to educate the student:

(1) Ongoing services provided by a public school district pursuant to §18-31-8(f) of this code, including without limitation, individual classes and extracurricular activities and programs;

(2) Tuition and fees at a participating school;

(3) Tutoring services provided by an individual or a tutoring facility: *Provided*, That such tutoring services are not provided by a member of the Hope Scholarship student’s immediate family;

(4) Fees for nationally standardized assessments, advanced placement examinations, any examinations related to college or university admission, and tuition and/or fees for preparatory courses for the aforementioned exams;

(5) Tuition and fees for programs of study or the curriculum of courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential that satisfies a workforce need;

(6) Tuition and fees for nonpublic online learning programs;

(7) Tuition and fees for alternative education programs;

(8) Fees for after-school or summer education programs;

(9) Educational services and therapies, including, but not limited to, occupational, behavioral, physical, speech-language, and audiology therapies;

(10) Curriculum as defined in §18-31-2 of this code;

(11) Fees for transportation paid to a fee-for-service transportation provider for the student to travel to and from an education service provider; ~~and~~

(12) Tuition and fees at a microschool as defined in §18-8-1(n)(1)(B) of this code; and

~~(12)~~ (13) Any other qualified expenses as approved by the board established pursuant to §18-31-3 of this code.

(b) Hope Scholarship funds may only be used for educational purposes in accordance with subsection (a) of this section. Nothing in this section requires that a Hope Scholarship student be enrolled, full- or part-time, in either a private school or nonpublic online school.

(c) Hope Scholarship funds may not be refunded, rebated, or shared with a parent or student in any manner. Any refund or rebate for goods or services purchased with Hope Scholarship funds shall be credited directly to a student’s Hope Scholarship account.

(d) Nothing in this section prohibits the parents of a Hope Scholarship student from making payments for the costs of educational goods and services not covered by the funds in their student’s Hope Scholarship account. However, personal deposits into a Hope Scholarship account are not permitted.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that microschool tuition and fees are qualifying expenses for Hope Scholarship accounts.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.