

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 57th Legislature (2019)

3 SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION
4 FOR

5 HOUSE BILL NO. 1247

6 By: McBride

7
8 SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

9 An Act relating to education scholarships; amending
10 68 O.S. 2011, Section 2357.206, as last amended by
11 Section 1, Chapter 288, O.S.L. 2017 (68 O.S. Supp.
12 2018, Section 2357.206), which relates to the
13 Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship Act;
14 mandating quadrennial submission of financial
15 statement to Oklahoma Tax Commission; directing Tax
16 Commission to publish statement on its website;
17 requiring annual reporting by scholarship-granting
18 organization; setting deadline for reporting; listing
19 information to be reported to Tax Commission;
20 directing Tax Commission to publish reported
21 information on its website; providing for annual
22 verification of eligibility by scholarship-granting
23 organization; and providing an effective date.

24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 68 O.S. 2011, Section 2357.206, as
last amended by Section 1, Chapter 288, O.S.L. 2017 (68 O.S. Supp.
2018, Section 2357.206), is amended to read as follows:

Section 2357.206 A. This act shall be known and may be cited
as the "Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship Act".

1 B. 1. Except as provided in subsection F of this section,
2 after August 26, 2011, there shall be allowed a credit for any
3 taxpayer who makes a contribution to an eligible scholarship-
4 granting organization. The credit shall be equal to fifty percent
5 (50%) of the total amount of contributions made during a taxable
6 year, not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for single
7 individuals, Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) for married
8 individuals filing jointly, or One Hundred Thousand Dollars
9 (\$100,000.00) for any taxpayer which is a legal business entity
10 including limited and general partnerships, corporations, subchapter
11 S corporations and limited liability companies; provided, if total
12 credits claimed pursuant to this paragraph exceed the caps
13 established pursuant to paragraph 1 of subsection D of this section,
14 the credit shall be equal to the taxpayer's proportionate share of
15 the cap for the taxable year, as determined pursuant to subsection H
16 of this section.

17 2. For any taxpayer who makes a contribution to an eligible
18 scholarship-granting organization and makes a written commitment to
19 contribute the same amount for an additional year, the credit for
20 the first year and the additional year shall be equal to seventy-
21 five percent (75%) of the total amount of the contribution made
22 during a taxable year, not to exceed the amounts established in
23 paragraph 1 of this subsection for the taxable year in which the
24 credit provided in this subsection is claimed. The taxpayer shall

1 provide evidence of the written commitment to the Oklahoma Tax
2 Commission at the time of filing the refund claim.

3 3. The credits authorized pursuant to the provisions of this
4 subsection shall be allocable to the partners, shareholders, members
5 or other equity owners of a taxpayer that is authorized to be
6 treated as a partnership for purposes of federal income tax
7 reporting for the taxable year for which the tax credits authorized
8 by this subsection are claimed on the applicable return, together
9 with required schedules, forms or reports of the partners,
10 shareholders, members or other equity owners of the taxpayer. Tax
11 credits which are allocated to such equity owners shall only be
12 limited in amount for the income tax return of a natural person or
13 persons based upon the limitation of the total credit amount to the
14 entity from which the tax credits have been allocated and shall not
15 be limited to One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for single
16 individuals or limited to Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) for
17 married persons filing a joint return.

18 4. On or before December 31, 2017, and once every four (4)
19 years thereafter, such scholarship-granting organization and
20 educational improvement granting organization shall submit to the
21 Oklahoma Tax Commission, Governor, President Pro Tempore of the
22 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, an audited
23 financial statement for the organization along with information
24 detailing the benefits, successes or failures of the program. The

1 Tax Commission shall publish and make publicly available on its
2 website the financial statement and information submitted pursuant
3 to this paragraph.

4 C. 1. Except as provided in subsection F of this section,
5 after August 26, 2011, there shall be allowed a credit for any
6 taxpayer who makes a contribution to an eligible educational
7 improvement grant organization. The credit shall be equal to fifty
8 percent (50%) of the total amount of contributions made during a
9 taxable year, not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for
10 single individuals, Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) for married
11 individuals filing jointly, or One Hundred Thousand Dollars
12 (\$100,000.00) for any taxpayer which is a legal business entity
13 including limited and general partnerships, corporations, subchapter
14 S corporations and limited liability companies; provided, if total
15 credits claimed pursuant to this paragraph exceed the cap
16 established pursuant to paragraph ~~4~~ 2 of subsection D of this
17 section, the credit shall be equal to the taxpayer's proportionate
18 share of the cap for the taxable year, as determined pursuant to
19 subsection H of this section.

20 2. For any taxpayer who makes a contribution to an eligible
21 educational improvement grant organization and makes a written
22 commitment to contribute the same amount for an additional year, the
23 credit for the first year and the additional year shall be equal to
24 seventy-five percent (75%) of the total amount of the contribution

1 made during a taxable year, not to exceed the amounts established in
2 paragraph 1 of this subsection for the taxable year in which the
3 credit provided in this subsection is claimed; provided, if total
4 credits claimed pursuant to this paragraph exceed the cap
5 established pursuant to paragraph 3 of this subsection, the credit
6 shall be equal to the taxpayer's proportionate share of the cap for
7 the taxable year, as determined pursuant to subsection H of this
8 section. The taxpayer shall provide evidence of the written
9 commitment to the Oklahoma Tax Commission at the time of filing the
10 refund claim.

11 3. The credits authorized pursuant to the provisions of this
12 subsection shall be allocable to the partners, shareholders, members
13 or other equity owners of a taxpayer that is authorized to be
14 treated as a partnership for purposes of federal income tax
15 reporting for the taxable year for which the tax credits authorized
16 by this subsection are claimed on the applicable return, together
17 with required schedules, forms or reports of the partners,
18 shareholders, members or other equity owners of the taxpayer. Tax
19 credits which are allocated to such equity owners shall only be
20 limited in amount for the income tax return of a natural person or
21 persons based upon the limitation of the total credit amount to the
22 entity from which the tax credits have been allocated and shall not
23 be limited to One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for single
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1 individuals or limited to Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) for
2 married persons filing a joint return.

3 D. Except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection H of
4 this section, for tax years 2017 and thereafter:

5 1. The total credits authorized pursuant to subsection B of
6 this section for all taxpayers shall not exceed Three Million Five
7 Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$3,500,000.00) annually;

8 2. The total credits authorized pursuant to subsection C of
9 this section for all taxpayers shall not exceed One Million Five
10 Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000.00) annually; and

11 3. The cap on total credits provided for in this subsection
12 shall be allocated by the Tax Commission as provided in subsection H
13 of this section.

14 E. For credits claimed for eligible contributions made during
15 tax year 2014 and thereafter, a credit shall not be allowed by the
16 Oklahoma Tax Commission for contributions made to a scholarship-
17 granting organization or an educational improvement grant
18 organization if that organization's percentage of funds actually
19 awarded is less than ninety percent (90%). For purposes of this
20 section, the "percentage of funds actually awarded" shall be
21 determined by dividing the total amount of funds actually awarded as
22 educational scholarships or educational improvement grants over the
23 most recent twenty-four (24) months by the total amount available to
24

1 award as educational scholarships or educational improvement grants
2 over the most recent twenty-four (24) months.

3 F. Any tax credits which are earned by a taxpayer pursuant to
4 this section during the time period beginning on the effective date
5 of this act through December 31, 2012, may not be claimed for any
6 period prior to the taxable year beginning January 1, 2013. No
7 credits which accrue during the time period beginning on the
8 effective date of this act through December 31, 2012, may be used to
9 file an amended tax return for any taxable year prior to the taxable
10 year beginning January 1, 2013.

11 G. As used in this section:

12 1. "Eligible student" means a child of school age who is
13 lawfully present in the United States and who is a member of a
14 household in which the total annual income during the preceding tax
15 year does not exceed an amount equal to three hundred percent (300%)
16 of the income standard used to qualify for a free or ~~reduced~~
17 reduced-price school lunch or who, during the immediately preceding
18 school year, attended or, by virtue of the location of such
19 student's place of residence, was eligible to attend a public school
20 in this state which has been identified for school improvement as
21 determined by the State Board of Education pursuant to the
22 requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. No. 107-
23 110. Once a student has received an educational scholarship, as
24 defined in paragraph 3 of this subsection, the student and any

1 | siblings who are members of the same household shall remain eligible
2 | until they graduate from high school or reach twenty-one (21) years
3 | of age, whichever occurs first;

4 | 2. "Eligible special needs student" means a child who has been
5 | provided services under an Individual Family Service Plan through
6 | the SoonerStart program and during transition was evaluated and
7 | determined to be eligible for school district services, a child of
8 | school age who has attended public school in our state with an
9 | individualized education program pursuant to the Individuals With
10 | Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C.A., Section 1400 et seq. or a
11 | child who has been diagnosed by a clinical professional as having a
12 | significant disability that will affect learning and who has been
13 | approved by the board of a scholarship-granting organization;

14 | 3. "Educational scholarships" means:

15 | a. scholarships to an eligible student of up to Five
16 | Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) or eighty percent (80%)
17 | of the statewide annual average per-pupil expenditure
18 | as determined by the National Center for Education
19 | Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, whichever is
20 | greater, to cover all or part of the tuition, fees and
21 | transportation costs of a qualified school which is
22 | accredited by the State Board of Education or an
23 | accrediting association approved by the Board pursuant
24 | to Section 3-104 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes,

1 b. scholarships to an eligible student of up to Five
2 Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) or eighty percent (80%)
3 of the statewide annual average per-pupil expenditure
4 as determined by the National Center for Education
5 Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, whichever is
6 greater, to cover the educational costs of a qualified
7 school which does not charge tuition, which enrolls
8 special populations of students and which is
9 accredited by the State Board of Education or an
10 accrediting association approved by the Board pursuant
11 to Section 3-104 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
12 or

13 c. scholarships to an eligible special needs student of
14 up to Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) to
15 cover all or part of the tuition, fees and
16 transportation costs of a qualified school for
17 eligible special needs students which is accredited by
18 the State Board of Education or an accrediting
19 association approved by the Board pursuant to Section
20 3-104 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

21 4. "Low-income eligible student" means an eligible student or
22 eligible special needs student who qualifies for a free or reduced-
23 price lunch;

1 5. "Qualified school" means an early childhood, elementary or
2 secondary private school in this state, including schools which
3 provide special educational programs for three-year-olds or
4 prekindergarten educational programs for four-year-olds, which:

- 5 a. is accredited by the State Board of Education or an
6 accrediting association approved by the Board pursuant
7 to Section 3-104 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- 8 b. is in compliance with all applicable health and safety
9 laws and codes,
- 10 c. has a stated policy against discrimination in
11 admissions on the basis of race, color, national
12 origin or disability, and
- 13 d. ensures academic accountability to parents and
14 guardians of students through regular progress
15 reports;

16 6. "Qualified school for eligible special needs students" means
17 an early childhood, elementary or secondary private school in a
18 county in this state, including schools which provide special
19 educational programs for three-year-olds or prekindergarten
20 educational programs for four-year-olds;

21 7. "Scholarship-granting organization" means an organization
22 which:
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- 1 a. is a nonprofit entity exempt from taxation pursuant to
2 the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, 26
3 U.S.C., Section 501(c)(3),
- 4 b. distributes periodic scholarship payments as checks
5 made out to an eligible student's or eligible special
6 needs student's parent or guardian and mailed to the
7 qualified school where the student is enrolled,
- 8 c. spends no more than ten percent (10%) of its annual
9 revenue on expenditures other than educational
10 scholarships as defined in paragraph 3 of this
11 subsection,
- 12 d. spends each year a portion of its expenditures on
13 educational scholarships for low-income eligible
14 students, as defined in paragraph 4 of this
15 subsection, in an amount equal to or greater than the
16 percentage of low-income eligible students in the
17 state,
- 18 e. ensures that scholarships are portable during the
19 school year and can be used at any qualified school
20 that accepts the eligible student or at any qualified
21 school for special needs students that accepts the
22 eligible special needs student,
- 23 f. registers with the Oklahoma Tax Commission as a
24 scholarship-granting organization, and

1 g. has policies in place to:

2 (1) carry out criminal background checks on all
3 employees and board members to ensure that no
4 individual is involved with the organization who
5 might reasonably pose a risk to the appropriate
6 use of contributed funds, and

7 (2) maintain full and accurate records with respect
8 to the receipt of contributions and expenditures
9 of those contributions and supply such records
10 and any other documentation required by the Tax
11 Commission to demonstrate financial
12 accountability;

13 8. "Annual revenue" means the total amount or value of
14 contributions received by an organization from taxpayers awarded
15 credits during the organization's fiscal year and all amounts earned
16 from interest or investments;

17 9. "Public school" means public schools as defined in Section
18 1-106 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

19 10. "Eligible school" means any public school that is not
20 located within a ten-mile radius of a qualified school in this
21 state, or any public school that is located within a ten-mile radius
22 of a qualified school in this state but offers grade-level
23 instruction different from the qualified school or any public school
24

1 located within a public school district with fewer than four
2 thousand five hundred (4,500) students;

3 11. "Early childhood education program" means a special
4 educational program for eligible special needs students who are
5 three (3) years of age or a prekindergarten educational program
6 provided to children who are at least four (4) years of age but not
7 more than five (5) years of age on or before September 1;

8 12. "Innovative educational program" means an advanced academic
9 or academic improvement program that is not part of the regular
10 coursework of a public school but that enhances the curriculum or
11 academic program of the school or provides early childhood education
12 programs to students;

13 13. "Educational improvement grant" means a grant to an
14 eligible public school to implement an innovative educational
15 program for students, including the ability for multiple public
16 schools to make an application and be awarded a grant to jointly
17 provide an innovative educational program; and

18 14. "Educational improvement grant organization" means an
19 organization which:

- 20 a. is a nonprofit entity exempt from taxation pursuant to
21 the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, 26
22 U.S.C., Section 501(c)(3), and
23 b. contributes at least ninety percent (90%) of its
24 annual receipts as grants to eligible schools for

1 innovative educational programs. For purposes of this
2 subparagraph, an educational improvement grant
3 organization contributes its annual cash receipts when
4 it expends or otherwise irrevocably encumbers those
5 funds for expenditure during the then current fiscal
6 year of the organization or during the next succeeding
7 fiscal year of the organization.

8 H. Total credits authorized by this section shall be allocated
9 as follows:

10 1. By January 10 of the year immediately following each
11 calendar year, a scholarship-granting organization or an educational
12 improvement grant organization which accepts contributions pursuant
13 to this section shall provide electronically to the Tax Commission
14 information on each contribution accepted during such taxable year.
15 At least once each taxable year, the scholarship-granting
16 organization or the educational improvement grant organization shall
17 notify each contributor that Oklahoma law provides for a total,
18 statewide cap on the amount of income tax credits allowed annually;

19 2. a. If the Tax Commission determines the total combined
20 credits claimed for contributions made to scholarship-
21 granting organizations during the most recently
22 completed calendar year by all taxpayers are in excess
23 of the statewide caps provided in paragraph 1 of
24 subsection D of this section, the Tax Commission shall

1 first allocate any amount of credits not claimed for
2 contributions made to educational improvement-granting
3 organizations, then shall determine the percentage of
4 the contribution which establishes the proportionate
5 share of the credit which may be claimed by any
6 taxpayer so that the total maximum credits authorized
7 by this section are not exceeded.

8 b. If the Tax Commission determines the total combined
9 credits claimed for contributions made to educational
10 improvement grant organizations during the most
11 recently completed calendar year by all taxpayers are
12 in excess of the statewide caps provided in paragraph
13 2 of subsection D of this section, the Tax Commission
14 shall first allocate any amount of credits not claimed
15 for contributions made to scholarship-granting
16 organizations, then shall determine the percentage of
17 the contribution which establishes the proportionate
18 share of the credit which may be claimed by any
19 taxpayer so that the maximum credits authorized by
20 this section are not exceeded.

21 c. Beginning for tax year 2016, credits earned, but not
22 allowed due to the application of statewide caps
23 provided in subsection D of this section will be
24 considered suspended and authorized to be used in the

1 next immediate tax year and applied to the next year's
2 statewide cap; and

3 3. The Tax Commission shall publish the percentage of the
4 contribution which may be claimed as a credit by contributors for
5 the most recently completed calendar year on the Tax Commission
6 website no later than February 15 of each calendar year for
7 contributions made the previous year. Each scholarship-granting
8 organization or educational improvement grant organization shall
9 notify contributors of that amount annually.

10 I. The credit authorized by this section shall not be used to
11 reduce the tax liability of the taxpayer to less than zero (0).

12 J. Any credits allowed but not used in any tax year may be
13 carried over, in order, to each of the three (3) years following the
14 year of qualification.

15 K. 1. In order to qualify under this section, an educational
16 improvement grant organization shall submit an application with
17 information to the Oklahoma Tax Commission on a form prescribed by
18 the Tax Commission that:

19 a. enables the Tax Commission to confirm that the
20 organization is a nonprofit entity exempt from
21 taxation pursuant to the provisions of the Internal
22 Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C., Section 501(c)(3), and

23 b. describes the proposed innovative educational program
24 or programs supported by the organization.

1 2. The Tax Commission shall review and approve or disapprove
2 the application, in consultation with the State Department of
3 Education.

4 3. In order to maintain eligibility under this section, an
5 educational improvement grant organization shall annually report the
6 following information to the Tax Commission by September 1 of each
7 year:

8 a. the name of the innovative educational program or
9 programs and the total amount of the grant or grants
10 made to those programs during the immediately
11 preceding school year,

12 b. a description of how each grant was utilized during
13 the immediately preceding school year and a
14 description of any demonstrated or expected innovative
15 educational improvements,

16 c. the names of the public ~~school~~ schools and school
17 districts where innovative educational programs that
18 received grants during the immediately preceding
19 school year were implemented,

20 d. where the organization collects information on a
21 county-by-county basis, and

22 e. the total number and total amount of grants made
23 during the immediately preceding school year for
24 innovative educational programs at public ~~school~~

1 schools by each county in which the organization made
2 grants.

3 4. The information required under paragraph 3 of this
4 subsection shall be submitted on a form provided by the Tax
5 Commission. No later than May 1 of each year, the Tax Commission
6 shall annually distribute sample forms together with the forms on
7 which the reports are required to be made to each approved
8 organization.

9 5. The Tax Commission shall not require any other information
10 be provided by an organization, except as expressly authorized in
11 this section.

12 L. 1. In order to maintain registration, a scholarship-
13 granting organization shall annually report to the Tax Commission by
14 September 1 of each year the following information regarding the
15 educational scholarships funded by the organization in the previous
16 academic year:

17 a. the name and address of the scholarship-granting
18 organization,

19 b. the names of the qualifying schools that received
20 funding for educational scholarships, the total amount
21 of funds paid to each qualifying school and the total
22 number of scholarship recipients enrolled in each
23 qualifying school,

1 c. the total number and total dollar amount of
2 contributions received during the previous academic
3 year,

4 d. the total number and total dollar amount of
5 educational scholarships awarded and funded during the
6 previous academic year,

7 e. the total number, total dollar amount and percentage
8 of educational scholarships awarded and funded during
9 the previous academic year disaggregated into the
10 following categories:

11 (1) students who qualify for the federal free and
12 reduced-price lunch program,

13 (2) students who during the immediately preceding
14 school year attended or who were eligible by
15 virtue of the residence of the student to attend
16 a public school in the state which was identified
17 for school improvement by the State Board of
18 Education,

19 (3) eligible special needs students, and

20 (4) students who were first-time recipients of a
21 scholarship, including information about the type
22 of public or private school the student was
23 enrolled in during the entire previous academic
24 year,

1 f. the percentage of the total amount of education
2 scholarship expenditures spent on low-income eligible
3 students, and

4 g. the percentage of annual revenue received by the
5 organization which was not expended on scholarships.

6 2. The Tax Commission shall publish and make available on its
7 website:

8 a. the information submitted by the scholarship-granting
9 organization pursuant to paragraph 1 of this
10 subsection,

11 b. a list of participating schools, and

12 c. all other application information submitted to the Tax
13 Commission by a scholarship-granting organization.

14 3. A scholarship-granting organization shall annually submit
15 verification to the Tax Commission that the organization still meets
16 the criteria set forth in paragraph 7 of subsection G of this
17 section.

18 M. In consultation with the State Department of Education, the
19 Tax Commission shall promulgate rules necessary to implement this
20 act. The rules shall include procedures for the registration of a
21 scholarship-granting organization or an educational improvement
22 grant organization for purposes of determining if the organization
23 meets the requirements of this act or for the revocation of the
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1 registration of an organization, if applicable, and for notice as
2 required in subsection H of this section.

3 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2019.

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