



99TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2015 and 2016

HB3252

by Rep. Jeanne M Ives

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

30 ILCS 105/5.866 new
105 ILCS 5/2-3.163 new

Amends the School Code. Creates the Illinois School Choice Program, which shall be administered by the State Board of Education. Provides that any State-recognized, non-public school wishing to enroll eligible students and be reimbursed for vouchers available under specified provisions shall notify the State Board of Education in writing of its intent. Specifies the eligibility for reimbursement of vouchers. Specifies reporting requirements for non-public schools that are participating in the Program. Contains provisions concerning the calculation of vouchers and how they may be used by parents. Contains provisions concerning the verification of the household income of participating parents. Provides that the State Board of Education shall adopt rules for implementation of the Program. Amends the State Finance Act to create the School Choice Fund as a special fund in the State treasury and provides that permitted fees collected by the State Board of Education shall be deposited into the Fund and shall be used by the State Board of Education to cover the administrative costs of the Program. Effective immediately.

LRB099 08759 NHT 28927 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
5 Section 5.866 as follows:

6 (30 ILCS 105/5.866 new)

7 Sec. 5.866. The School Choice Fund.

8 Section 10. The School Code is amended by adding Section
9 2-3.163 as follows:

10 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.163 new)

11 Sec. 2-3.163. Illinois School Choice Program; vouchers.

12 (a) For purposes of this Section:

13 "Eligible pupil" means a student enrolled in kindergarten
14 or any of grades one through 12 who is an Illinois resident and
15 who would be enrolled in a low-performing school if not
16 attending a participating school.

17 "Fund" means the School Choice Fund.

18 "Low-performing school" means a public school in this State
19 that enrolls students in any of grades kindergarten through 12
20 and that is ranked within the lowest 10% of schools in the
21 school district in terms of the percentage of students meeting

1 or exceeding standards on State assessments.

2 "Parent" means the custodian of an eligible pupil.

3 "Participating school" means a State-recognized,
4 non-public school that has notified the State Board of
5 Education in writing of its intent to enroll eligible students
6 and be reimbursed for vouchers and that has paid any required
7 fees to the State Board of Education and complied with all
8 statutory and regulatory requirements for the Illinois School
9 Choice Program.

10 (b) The Illinois School Choice Program is created and shall
11 be administered by the State Board of Education. Any
12 State-recognized, non-public school wishing to enroll eligible
13 students and be reimbursed for vouchers available under this
14 Section shall notify the State Board of Education in writing of
15 its intent. To be eligible for reimbursement for vouchers,
16 participating schools must pay a nonrefundable fee established
17 by the State Board of Education by rule to be deposited into
18 the Fund. The total amount of fees deposited into the Fund
19 shall be in an amount sufficient to cover administrative costs
20 of the program to the State Board of Education. The State Board
21 of Education may require an additional fee from participating
22 schools and public and private grant funds to commission
23 external reviews of the performance of the Illinois School
24 Choice Program.

25 (c) The State Board of Education shall require
26 participating non-public schools to report the cost of tuition

1 and fees at the school, the address of each eligible pupil, and
2 each eligible pupil's household income tier as described in
3 items (1) through (3) of subsection (d) of this Section. The
4 State Board of Education may establish additional reporting and
5 auditing requirements for non-public schools for participation
6 under this Section.

7 (d) Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, any pupil in
8 grades kindergarten through 12 shall be eligible for an
9 educational voucher on his or her behalf if the pupil is
10 enrolled at a participating school. Once an eligible pupil
11 qualifies for a voucher, the pupil is entitled to a voucher for
12 the remaining applicable grades taught at the participating
13 school. The annual amount of the voucher shall be equal to the
14 lesser of the total annual cost of tuition and fees at the
15 non-public school or the following:

16 (1) the amount of the foundation level, as provided
17 under subsection (B) of Section 18-8.05 of this Code, in
18 the case of a pupil who is the member of family that has a
19 total family income that does not exceed 3 times the
20 federal poverty level;

21 (2) one-half the amount of the foundation level, as
22 provided under subsection (B) of Section 18-8.05 of this
23 Code, in the case of a pupil who is the member of family
24 that has a total family income between 3 and 4 times the
25 federal poverty level; or

26 (3) the amount of the flat grant, as provided under

1 paragraph (4) of subsection (E) of Section 18-8.05 of this
2 Code, in the case of a pupil who is the member of a family
3 that has a total family income exceeding 4 times the
4 federal poverty level.

5 (e) The State Board of Education shall determine by rule
6 the process by which parents receive vouchers. The vouchers may
7 be redeemed by a parent at any participating school. Vouchers
8 issued pursuant to this Section are redeemable only for a net
9 reduction in tuition owed by the parent for an eligible student
10 to attend a participating school. No portion of voucher funds
11 may be refunded directly to parents in the form of cash or
12 similar payment. If the participating school at which a voucher
13 is redeemed for an eligible pupil is different from the school
14 at which that eligible pupil was registered when the voucher
15 was issued, then the school at which the eligible pupil is
16 currently enrolled must notify the State Board of Education of
17 the eligible pupil's enrollment status, family income,
18 parental contact information, and student identification
19 number in order to receive reimbursement for that voucher.

20 (f) Participating schools shall request documentation from
21 parents of pupils participating under this Section to verify
22 household income for purposes of determining the amount of the
23 voucher to which each eligible pupil is entitled. Parents
24 failing to provide documentation shall be disqualified from
25 receiving a voucher for that school year.

26 (g) Participating schools shall certify to the State Board

1 of Education the number of vouchers received for enrolled
2 pupils in each income bracket to be eligible for reimbursement.
3 The State Board of Education shall reimburse the participating
4 school for the total amount of the vouchers received in
5 quarterly installments on or before September 30, December 30,
6 March 30, and June 20 of each year.

7 (h) The School Choice Fund is created as a special fund in
8 the State treasury. Fees collected pursuant to subsection (b)
9 of this Section shall be deposited into the Fund and shall be
10 used, subject to appropriation, by the State Board of Education
11 to cover the administrative costs of the Illinois School Choice
12 Program.

13 (i) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for
14 implementation of this Section.

15 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
16 becoming law.