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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Governor Proposes Increase in Funding for Special Needs Scholarships**

**Raleigh, NC** – For the second year in a row, Governor Pat McCrory is proposing as part of his budget to increase funding for Special Needs Scholarships. The Governor is proposing to increase the budget for these scholarships by \$5.8M. This will provide funding for approximately 500 new students.

Rep. Paul Stam, Speaker Pro Tempore of the NC House of Representatives, commends the Governor for his leadership in this area. “We have worked closely with the Governor in developing this proposal and will work tirelessly to see that this additional funding is included in the House budget.”

During the long session, the General Assembly appropriated total funding of \$4.23M. This year over 830 students have been awarded the scholarship. However, there are over 400 students on the waitlist.

Rep. Stam said, “This increase in funding will provide scholarships for approximately 500 additional students. Increasing the number of scholarships to approximately 1,300 students still only provides scholarships for less than 1% of the students with special needs in the state.” There are over 200,000 special needs students in North Carolina.

Other House members expressed their support of the increased funding for the Special Needs Scholarship. House Appropriations Chairman Nelson Dollar indicated he is looking forward to working with Rep. Stam and the Governor on this request. “This scholarship program saves the state money and allows parents to choose the right educational setting for their child. The scholarship provides up to 8,000 per year and the 2015-16 appropriation for a special needs student is over \$9,800.”

House Education Appropriations Co-Chairman Rob Bryan also offered his support. Rep. Bryan said, “I have had discussions where parents tell me about the positive impact the scholarship program has had on the educational outcomes for their students.”

The Special Need Scholarships are administered by the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. To be eligible, a student must have attended a public school the previous semester unless the student is in kindergarten or first grade. The scholarships can be used for tuition, special education related services and education-related technology costs incurred by parents.

Applications for next school year will be available on NCSEAA’s website at [www.ncseaa.org](http://www.ncseaa.org) on May 1, 2016. Priority is given to students who received a scholarship during the previous semester. Additional scholarships will be awarded to eligible students in the order in which the applications are received.

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