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## DIGEST

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HB 446 Original

2019 Regular Session

Steve Carter

**Abstract:** Provides for a voucher program for public school students in 3rd through 5th grade who score below mastery in English language arts on state assessments.

Proposed law establishes the Reading Scholarship Program for eligible students. Defines "eligible student" as a student who is enrolled in a public school in the third, fourth, or fifth grade and who scored below mastery in English language arts on the state assessment in the prior school year. Gives preference to eligible students classified as English Language Learners.

Proposed law provides that the amount of the scholarship is \$500 and eligible expenses are: instructional materials; curriculum, including online instruction; tutoring services; summer programs; and after-school programs all of which are designed to improve reading or literacy skills.

Proposed law requires the state Dept. of Education to administer the program pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education. Requires the department to:

- (1) Determine student eligibility.
- (2) Develop and accept applications and award scholarships on a first-come, first-served basis, except as otherwise provided by proposed law.
- (3) Notify local school boards of the application process, requirements, and deadlines for parents and legal guardians.
- (4) Annually report to the House and Senate education committees on the implementation of the program.

Requires local public school boards to notify the parents or legal guardians of eligible students of the process for applying for a scholarship.

Specifies that any expenses above the amount of the scholarship shall be the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Provides that program implementation is subject to the appropriation of funds.

(Adds R.S. 17:4031.1)