A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO EXPAND TUITION GRANTS TO ATTEND A CONSTITUENT INSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA TO INCLUDE GRADUATES FROM COOPERATIVE AND INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Part 6 of Article 23 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes, as enacted by Section 8A.1 of S.L. 2021-180, reads as rewritten:

"Part 6. Tuition Grant for High School Graduates of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Eligible Public Schools.

§ 116-209.89. Definitions.
For purposes of this Part, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Eligible graduate. – A high school graduate from an eligible public school.

(2) Eligible public school. – The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM), the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA), or a cooperative innovative high school as defined in G.S. 115C-238.50A(1a).

§ 116-209.90. Tuition grants for eligible graduates to attend a constituent institution.

(a) Within the funds available, a high school graduate from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) or the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) an eligible graduate in each school year who meets the following conditions shall be eligible qualify for a tuition grant awarded under this Part:

(1) Is a resident for tuition purposes under the criteria set forth in G.S. 116-143.1 and in accordance with the coordinated and centralized residency determination process administered by the Authority.

(2) Enrolls as a full-time student in a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina in the next academic year after graduation.

(b) Students who receive initial tuition grants as a cohort of a high school graduating class of NCSSM or UNCSA shall also be eligible qualify to apply for tuition grants for subsequent academic years for up to a total of four academic years in an undergraduate program. A student must be continuously enrolled in a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina after the award of the initial tuition grant to be eligible qualify for tuition grants in subsequent academic years. The Authority shall have the discretion to waive this requirement if the student is able to demonstrate that any of the following have substantially disrupted or interrupted the student's pursuit of a degree: (i) a military service obligation, (ii) serious medical debilitation, (iii) a short-term or long-term disability, or (iv) other extraordinary hardship.
(c) The amount of the tuition grant to each eligible graduate shall be determined and distributed as provided in G.S. 116-209.91.

§ 116-209.91. Administration of tuition grants.

(a) The Authority shall administer the tuition grants provided for in this Part pursuant to guidelines and procedures established by the Authority consistent with its practices for administering State-funded financial aid. The guidelines and procedures shall include an application process and schedule, notification and disbursement procedures, standards for reporting, and standards for return of tuition grants when a student withdraws. The Authority shall not approve any grant until it receives proper certification from the appropriate constituent institution that the student applying for the grant is an eligible qualifying student. Upon receipt of the certification, the Authority shall remit, at the times it prescribes, the tuition grant to the constituent institution on behalf, and to the credit, of the student. In the event a student on whose behalf a tuition grant has been paid is not enrolled and carrying a minimum academic load as of the tenth classroom day following the beginning of the school term for which the tuition grant was paid, the constituent institution shall refund the full amount of the tuition grant to the Authority.

(d) In the event there are not sufficient funds to provide each eligible qualifying student who has applied in accordance with the application process and the schedule established by the Authority with a full tuition grant as provided by this Part, each eligible qualifying student shall receive a pro rata share of funds available for the academic year covered by the appropriation in the preceding fiscal year.

SECTION 2. (a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina for the 2022-2023 fiscal year the sum of eleven million five hundred thousand dollars ($11,500,000) in recurring funds to expand tuition grants to attend a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina to include graduates from cooperative and innovative high schools.

SECTION 2.(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to appropriate the following additional funds for the purpose of awarding tuition grants for future graduates from cooperative and innovative high schools:

(1) For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the sum of eleven million five hundred thousand dollars ($11,500,000) in recurring funds.

(2) For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of eleven million five hundred thousand dollars ($11,500,000) in recurring funds.

(3) For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of eleven million five hundred thousand dollars ($11,500,000) in recurring funds.

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2022. Section 1 of this act applies beginning with graduates of cooperative and innovative high schools from the 2021-2022 school year.