



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ELLEN E. WEAVER
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

December 31, 2025

The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander
President of the Senate
Room 213, Gressette Building
Columbia, SC 29201

The Honorable G. Murrell Smith
Speaker of the House
Room 506, Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear President Alexander and Speaker Smith:

Pursuant to the South Carolina Code of Laws, this letter fulfills the statutorily mandated reporting under Section 59-8-145(H), which instructs the South Carolina Department of Education to report to you annually the number of Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) Program applications, the number of students accepted, along with the number of students not accepted and the reason(s) why they were not accepted.

The following reflects the ESTF applications for the 2025-26 school year:

- 1,124 eligible students, having completed their first scholarship year, and submitted test scores pursuant to the requirements of Section 59-8-150(C)(1), successfully renewed their scholarships for the 2025-26 school year.
- 16,134 individual student applications were received from 9,636 families, of which:
 - 8,876 new students were initially accepted into the ESTF Program.
 - 311 additional students who completed their applications remain on a waiting list.
 - 489 of the prior year recipient students mistakenly completed an additional duplicate application for this school year.
 - 1,069 students were awarded scholarships, but subsequently removed from the program for failing to maintain eligibility, and their slots were given to waitlisted students
 - 2,151 students were denied acceptance into the ESTF Program:
 - 4 were denied due to being out of state residents.

«Name»

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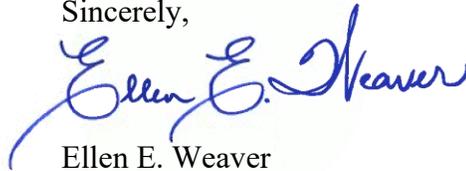
December 30, 2025

- 1,698 were denied due to income levels above the required 300% or less of federal poverty.
 - 429 were outside school age.
 - 20 applicants were removed from the waiting list before being awarded after stating they would remain in their zoned public school.
 - 3,238 began but did not complete the full application.
- After the Program application was closed due once the statutory cap of 10,000 scholarship recipients was reached, an additional 10,425 students signed up for the Department's wait list without completing a full application.

Enclosed please find the accompanying report, "A Promising Start," which provides additional detail regarding the implementation of the Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program in its inaugural 2024-25 school year.

With the submission of this information, the South Carolina Department of Education has satisfied the annual reporting requirements set forth in the South Carolina Code of Laws. We remain committed to providing clear, accurate, and timely information to support legislative oversight and informed policymaking. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional detail or have further questions regarding the ESTF Program.

Sincerely,



Ellen E. Weaver
State Superintendent of Education

cc: The Honorable Henry McMaster, Governor
The Honorable Greg Hembree, Senate Education Chair
The Honorable Shannon Erickson, House Education Chair