AN ACT to repeal 115.7915 (1) (a) and 115.7915 (5) (c); to renumber and amend
115.7915 (4m) (e) 1.; to amend 115.7915 (2) (intro.), 115.7915 (2) (b), 115.7915 (2) (c), 115.7915 (2) (d), 115.7915 (2) (e), 115.7915 (2) (f), 115.7915 (2) (g), 115.7915 (3) (a), 115.7915 (3) (b), 115.7915 (4) (b), 115.7915 (4m) (e) 2., 115.7915 (6) (a) and 115.7915 (6) (h) 2.; to create 115.7915 (2) (h), 115.7915 (4m) (e) 1. a. and 115.7915 (8) (c) of the statutes; and to affect 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, section 9134 (6q) (intro.) and 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, section 9134 (6q) (c); relating to: special needs scholarship program.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill makes several changes to the Special Needs Scholarship Program, created in the 2015–17 Biennial Budget Act. Under the program, beginning in the 2016–17 school year, children with disabilities who are enrolled in a public school in this state may apply to the Department of Public Instruction to annually receive financial assistance from the state to attend a participating private school in this state.

Among other changes, this bill requires a child with a disability who wishes to participate in the program to have an Individualized Education Program or services plan in effect prior to being eligible to participate. Current law requires only that
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the IEP or services plan to be completed for the child. The bill also permits a child with a disability to apply for a scholarship and to attend a private school under the program at any time during a school year. In addition, the bill requires the parent or guardian of a child attending a private school under the program to make the child available no more than once every three years for a reevaluation of the child’s IEP and services plan. Finally, the bill requires a participating private school that receives more applications under the program than the number of spaces available at the school to accept applications in the order in which they are received; current law requires the private school to select applicants on a random basis.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1. **SECTION 1.** 115.7915 (1) (a) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is repealed.

2. **SECTION 2.** 115.7915 (2) (intro.) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

   115.7915 (2) Scholarship requirements. (intro.) Beginning in the 2016−17 school year, the department shall provide to a child with a disability a scholarship under sub. (4m) (a) to attend an eligible private school if all of the following apply:

3. **SECTION 3.** 115.7915 (2) (b) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

   115.7915 (2) (b) The governing body of the eligible private school notified the department of its intent to participate in the program under this section.

4. **SECTION 4.** 115.7915 (2) (c) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

   115.7915 (2) (c) The eligible school has been approved as a private school by the state superintendent under s. 118.165 (2) or is accredited by the Wisconsin North Central Association, Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation,
the Independent Schools Association of the Central States, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation, Wisconsin Association of Christian Schools, National Lutheran School Accreditation, the diocese or archdiocese within which the private school is located, or any other organization recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation, as of the August 1 preceding the school term for which the scholarship is awarded.

SECTION 5. 115.7915 (2) (d) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (2) (d) An individualized education program or services plan has been completed is in effect for the child.

SECTION 6. 115.7915 (2) (e) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (2) (e) The child attended was enrolled in a public school in this state for the entire school year immediately preceding the school year for which the child first receives a scholarship under this section.

SECTION 7. 115.7915 (2) (f) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (2) (f) The child, or the child’s parent or guardian on behalf of the child, or for a child with a disability who has reached the age of 18 and has not been adjudicated incompetent, the child, submitted an application for a scholarship under this section, on a form prepared by the department that includes the document developed by the department under sub. (4) (a) to the eligible school that the child will attend. A child, or child’s parent, or guardian or a child with a disability who has reached the age of 18 may apply for a scholarship at any time during a school year
and, subject to sub. (3) (b), a child may begin attending an eligible private school under this section at any time during the school year.

**SECTION 8.** 115.7915 (2) (g) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (2) (g) The eligible private school has accepted the child's application to attend the eligible private school under a scholarship awarded under this section.

**SECTION 9.** 115.7915 (2) (h) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (2) (h) The child's parent or guardian consents to make the child available for a reevaluation, by the individualized education program team appointed for the child by the resident school district, within 60 days following a request for a reevaluation under this paragraph. Upon the request of the school board of the child's resident school district, the individualized education program team shall conduct the reevaluation required under this paragraph in the manner described under s. 115.782 (4) (a) 2. no more frequently than once every 3 years, determined from the date of the most recent evaluation or reevaluation conducted for the child under s. 115.782 or, for a child whose most recent evaluation or reevaluation was conducted more than 3 years before the child began attending a private school under this section, the date the child began attending a private school under this section.

**SECTION 10.** 115.7915 (3) (a) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (3) (a) The governing body of an eligible private school that intends to participate in the program under this section shall notify the department of its intent. The governing body of the eligible private school shall include in the notice
under this paragraph the number of spaces the eligible private school has available for children receiving a scholarship under this section.

**SECTION 11.** 115.7915 (3) (b) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (3) (b) If a private school participating in the program under this section receives more applications for scholarships under sub. (2) (f) than the number of children specified in the notice under par. (a), it shall select children on a random basis accept applicants in the order in which applications are received, except that it the private school may give preference to siblings of pupils who are already attending the private school.

**SECTION 12.** 115.7915 (4) (b) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (4) (b) Upon being notified receipt of notice under sub. (3) (c), the department shall request verification from the child’s resident school board that the child has an individualized education program or services plan in place for the child and notify the child’s resident school board that, pending verification that the requirements of sub. (2) have been satisfied, the child has been will be awarded a scholarship under this section. The child’s resident school board shall, within 3 days of receiving the notice, a request under this paragraph, provide verification to the department and provide the governing body of the private school that accepted the child with a copy of the child’s individualized education program.

**SECTION 13.** 115.7915 (4m) (e) 1. of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is renumbered 115.7915 (4m) (e) 1. (intro.) and amended to read:

115.7915 (4m) (e) 1. (intro.) If an individualized education program team, upon reevaluation of a child as required under sub. (5) (c), unanimously (2) (h), determines
that a child receiving a scholarship under par. (a) is no longer a child with a disability, the all of the following apply:

b. The child is not eligible to receive a scholarship under par. (a) beginning in the school term following the determination.

SECTION 14. 115.7915 (4m) (e) 1. a. of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (4m) (e) 1. a. The child’s resident school district shall notify the parent or guardian of the child of the procedural safeguards in place for the child under 20 USC 1415.

SECTION 15. 115.7915 (4m) (e) 2. of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (4m) (e) 2. If a child who has been determined to be ineligible under subd. 1. continues to attend the private school he or she attended under a scholarship awarded under par. (a), for each school year the child attends the private school beginning with the school year following the determination under subd. 1., the department shall pay, from the appropriation under s. 20.255 (2) (az), to the private school, on behalf of the child’s parent or guardian, an amount equal to the appropriate per pupil amount paid to a private school participating in a parental choice program under s. 118.60 or 119.23 in that school year. The department shall make scholarship payments under this paragraph in accordance with the payment schedule specified in s. 119.23 (4) (c).

SECTION 16. 115.7915 (5) (c) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is repealed.

SECTION 17. 115.7915 (6) (a) of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, is amended to read:
115.7915 (6) (a) Comply with all health and safety laws or codes that apply to
private public schools.

SECTION 18. 115.7915 (6) (h) 2. of the statutes, as created by 2015 Wisconsin
Act 55, is amended to read:

115.7915 (6) (h) 2. Provide a record of Within 5 days of receiving a request from
the resident school board of a child with a disability attending the private school
under this section, provide all records relating to the implementation of the child’s
individualized education program or services plan by the private school, as required
under subd. 1., including an evaluation of the child’s progress, to the school board of
the school district in which the child resides in the form and manner prescribed by
the department.

SECTION 19. 115.7915 (8) (c) of the statutes is created to read:

115.7915 (8) (c) The state superintendent may withhold payment under sub.
(4m) from a private school participating in the program under this section if the
private school violates this section.

SECTION 20. 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, section 9134 (6q) (intro.) is amended to
read:

[2015 Wisconsin Act 55] Section 9134 (6q) SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM. (intro.) Notwithstanding section 115.7915 (2) of the statutes, as created
by this act, the department shall award a scholarship to a child to attend an eligible
a private school in the 2016–17 school year under section 115.7915 of the statutes,
as created by this act, if the child satisfies the eligibility requirements under section
115.7915 (2) (b) to (d), (h), and (f) of the statutes, as created by this act, and all of the
following conditions are met:
SECTION 21. 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, section 9134 (6q) (c) is repealed.

(END)