



Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee

June 25, 2019, at 11:30 a.m.

Pocahontas Building, Senate Committee Room A

brownscholarship.virginia.gov

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee (the Committee) met in Richmond to review scholarship applications for the 2019–2020 school year. Senator L. Louise Lucas, chair, called the meeting to order and directed Senator Mamie E. Locke to preside over the proceedings.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by a program update, a review of scholarship applications, and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Committee's website](#).

Updates on the Reopening of the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program

Lily Jones, Division of Legislative Services

Ms. Jones provided updates on the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program following the limited-time reopening of the scholarship program to new applicants for the 2019–2020 school year. The Committee voted in 2016 to accept renewal scholarship applications only; however, after receiving only three applications for renewal for the 2019–2020 school year and reviewing the balance of the scholarship fund, the Committee voted on April 16, 2019, to accept new applications to the program for a limited time ahead of the 2019–2020 school year. Since the program's start in the 2005–2006 school year, \$1,263,777.70 have been disbursed to support the education of 88 individual students. The fund has \$1,005,680.40 remaining in its balance.

Following the Committee's April 16 meeting, staff sent out a press release and published a newspaper ad statewide to announce the limited-time reopening of the scholarship program to new applicants for the 2019–2020 school year. Five scholarship applications were received. Of the five applicants, four were students who had been accepted into the program in previous years, and one was a student new to the program. The five applications were presented for review by the Committee in its executive session.

Executive Session

The Committee voted to convene an executive session pursuant to subdivision A 36 of § 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia to discuss and consider matters pertaining to the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program excluded from public discussion under this section. At the conclusion of the executive session, the Committee voted to return to open session.

¹ **Members Present:** Senator L. Louise Lucas (chair; absent for votes), Senator Mamie E. Locke (acting chair), Delegate Les R. Adams, Delegate Margaret B. Ransone, Joan Johns Cobbs, Robert Hamlin, M. Vishon Luck, Dr. Karen Eley Sanders, Joy Cabarrus Speakes

Members Absent: Delegate Luke E. Torian, Delegate Jeffrey M. Bourne

2019–2020 Academic Year Scholarships

The Committee directed staff to notify one student of her acceptance into the scholarship program and to notify four students of their acceptance into the scholarship program pending confirmation of enrollment in an accredited program by September 1, 2019.

Discussion: 2020–2021 and Beyond

In light of the scholarship fund's high remaining balance and the limited number of eligible applicants, the Committee voted unanimously to reopen the scholarship program to new applicants in future school years, ending the Committee's renewal-only policy. Staff will advertise the reopening of the program and accept new and renewal applications in early 2020 for the 2020–2021 school year.

Members also reviewed correspondence to the Committee inquiring about the possibility of awarding legacy scholarships to descendants of those affected by Massive Resistance. Currently, by statute, the Committee may only award scholarships to students who were directly affected by the school closings in Virginia following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Scholarship funds are not available to descendants of those directly affected. However, per a 2015 opinion solicited from the Office of the Attorney General, funds could be made available to descendants of those directly affected by the school closings if the General Assembly were to amend the definition of "eligible student" in § 30-231.2 of the Code of Virginia. The Committee took no action regarding legacy scholarships but will revisit the matter in future meetings.

Next Meeting

The Committee planned to meet again in spring 2020 to review applications for the 2020–2021 school year.

For more information, see the [Committee's website](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

Lily Jones, Research Associate, DLS
ljones@dls.virginia.gov
804-698-1850
