

May 16, 2000

**H 1547. CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP.** TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF MINORITY AND AT-RISK STUDENTS TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM TO ASSIST FAMILIES AT CERTAIN INCOME LEVELS WITH CHILDREN PERFORMING BELOW GRADE LEVEL IN IMPROVING FAMILY COHESIVENESS, FUNCTIONING, AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS, TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO STUDY ISSUES RELATED TO CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP, TO MAKE PERMANENT THE COMMISSION, TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE HISTORICALLY MINORITY COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP, AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT THIS ACT. Requires that DHHS, Div'n of Social Services establish at least eight pilot programs referenced in title. Establishes eligibility requirements, including at least one child performing at least one year below grade level and at least one parent who agrees to participate in a culturally appropriate assessment of family functioning. Requires that Dep't establish a task force to help with developing and implementing the program. Task force members include Dep't of Public Instruction, Cooperative Extension Services at NC A&T and NCSU, the Office of Juvenile Justice, and Workforce Development Boards, among others. Requires measurable outcomes. Requires progress report by March 1, 2001 and final report by February 1, 2002. Appropriates \$250,000 from General Fund to DHHS, Div'n of Social Services, for planning and initial implementation of the pilot program. Requires that DHHS, Dep't of Commerce, and Dep't of Public Instruction allocate available and suitable block grant funds to this program.

Requires State Board of Education to study the connection between identification of minority and at-risk students as students with behavioral or emotional disabilities and the gap in student achievement. Lists issues to be studied, including curricula for such students and qualifications of teachers assigned to teach them. Requires that Board study the underrepresentation of minority and at-risk students in honors classes, advanced placement classes, and academically gifted programs. Lists topics to be studied, including criteria for selection to these programs. For both studies, requires interim report by January 1, 2001 and final report by March 1, 2001. Requires that Board design an annual Minority Achievement Report Card to be implemented fully beginning with the 2001-2002 school year. Requires that Board report on development of report card by October 1, 2000. Requires that Board develop guidelines to promote formation of local task forces in each local school administrative unit to help close the academic achievement gap. Lists other items that Board must develop a plan and budget for by November 15, 2000, including providing sufficient funding for Limited English Proficiency students. Requires that Board develop a plan to establish a hotline to collect complaints alleging disparate treatment of minority students and students from low-income families. Requires that Board report data from 1998-99 and 1999-2000 school years on student suspensions and expulsions, showing breakdown by designated categories, including race, gender, and conduct; report due to Commission by November 15, 2000.

Amends GS Ch. 120 by adding a new Article 27, permanently establishing the Commission on Improving the Academic Achievement of Minority and At-Risk Students. Provides for 22 members, as follows: five senators and three public members appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate, five representatives and three public members appointed by the Speaker of the House, and six public members appointed by the Governor, at least one who represents a statewide nonprofit education advocacy organization that advocates on behalf of minority and at-risk students and at least one who represents a statewide organization that represents the interests of African-Americans. Provides for members to serve two year terms with no prohibition against reappointment. Defines Comm'n authority in devising recommendations to address the status of minority and at-risk students. Outlines reporting requirements, powers, reimbursement, and subcommittee authorization.

Appropriates \$1.5 million from the General Fund in 2000-2001 to the UNC Board of Governors to support the Historically Minority College and University Initiative to Close the Achievement Gap. Authorizes State Board of Education to use up to \$200,000 of funds appropriated to State Aid to Local School Administrative Units to implement this act. Appropriates

\$500,000 from the General Fund in 2000-2001 to the General Assembly to fund the Comm'n.  
Effective July 1, 2000, except that establishment of Comm'n is effective January 31, 2001.

**Intro. by Oldham, Boyd-McIntyre, Fox, Melton, and Warren.**

Ref. to Rules	GS 120, APPROP
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