

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

H.B. 987  
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH40565-MVa-33

Short Title: FAFSA Completion as Graduation Requirement. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Hawkins.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO MAKE COMPLETION OF THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL  
3 STUDENT AID A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-83.31 reads as rewritten:

6 "§ 115C-83.31. Exit standards and graduation requirements.

7 (a) The State Board of Education shall require the following for high school graduation:

8 (1) Successful completion of instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation as  
9 provided in G.S. 115C-81.25(c)(10).

10 (2) A passing grade in the semester course on the Founding Principles of the  
11 United States of America and the State of North Carolina described in  
12 G.S. 115C-81.45(d)(1).

13 (3) A passing grade in a computer science course as provided in  
14 G.S. 115C-81.90(c). The computer science course shall fulfill one credit that  
15 is not an English, mathematics, science, or social studies credit. Students  
16 enrolling in a public high school in this State after completion of the eleventh  
17 grade shall be exempt from this requirement.

18 (4) Completion and submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
19 (FAFSA) during each student's senior year, unless (i) the student's parent or  
20 legal guardian, or the student, if the student is an emancipated minor, submits  
21 a signed waiver certifying that the student understands what the FAFSA is and  
22 declines to complete it or (ii) the principal of the student's high school waives  
23 the requirement due to extenuating circumstances.

24 (b) The following restrictions apply to the State Board of Education regarding certain  
25 graduation requirements:

26 (1) The Board shall not adopt or enforce any rule that requires Algebra I as a  
27 graduation standard or as a requirement for a high school diploma for any  
28 student whose individualized education program (i) identifies the student as  
29 learning disabled in the area of mathematics and (ii) states that this learning  
30 disability will prevent the student from mastering Algebra I.

31 (2) The Board shall not require any student to prepare a high school graduation  
32 project as a condition of graduation from high school.

33 (3) The Board shall not enforce a computer science graduation requirement for  
34 any student whose individualized education program states that the student's  
35 disability would prevent the student from completing that graduation  
36 requirement.



1 (c) The State Board of Education shall develop a sequence of courses that shall be  
2 available in all local school administrative units to allow a student to complete the credits  
3 required for graduation in a three-year period. The Board shall indicate on a student's transcript  
4 if the student graduates from a public high school within three years of entering the ninth grade.  
5 A local board of education shall not require any additional credits beyond those mandated by the  
6 Board for high school graduation."

7 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-218.85(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

8 "(8) A charter school shall require completion and submission of the Free  
9 Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each student's senior  
10 year as a graduation requirement in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4)."

11 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-238.66(1) is amended by adding a new sub-subdivision to

12 read:

13 "h. The board of directors shall require completion and submission of the  
14 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each  
15 student's senior year as a graduation requirement in accordance with  
16 G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4)."

17 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 116-239.8(b)(2) is amended by adding a new sub-subdivision to

18 read:

19 "g. The chancellor shall ensure completion and submission of the Free  
20 Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each student's  
21 senior year as a graduation requirement in accordance with  
22 G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4)."

23 **SECTION 5.** Section 6(d) of S.L. 2018-32 is amended by adding a new subdivision

24 to read:

25 "(5c) G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4), To require each senior to complete and submit the  
26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a graduation  
27 requirement."

28 **SECTION 6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
29 Public Instruction the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in nonrecurring funds for  
30 the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be used to train, educate, and prepare public school units regarding  
31 the requirements of this act.

32 **SECTION 7.** Section 6 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2024. The remainder of  
33 this act is effective when it becomes law, and Sections 1 through 5 of this act apply beginning  
34 with the 2025-2026 school year.