

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

H.B. 581  
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10260-NGa-44

Short Title: Career Pathways Transparency Act.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Johnson.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE CAREER PATH OPTIONS TRANSPARENCY ACT.

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 116-209.16A reads as rewritten:

5 "**§ 116-209.16A. Information on career and major options.**

6 (a) Know Before You Go. – The Authority shall provide information on a ~~Web site,~~  
7 website, under a section entitled "Know Before You Go," to students and parents to assist in  
8 selection of major and career options in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State, as  
9 provided in this section. The information shall be updated annually.

10 (a1) Definitions. – The following definitions shall apply in this section:

- 11 (1) Private institutions of higher education. – Includes postsecondary institutions  
12 that award postsecondary degrees, as defined in G.S. 116-15(a2)(1).  
13 (2) Prosperity zones of the State. – The eight permanent prosperity zones  
14 identified in G.S. 143B-28.1.  
15 (3) Public institutions of higher education. – Includes the constituent institutions  
16 of The University of North Carolina and the community colleges under the  
17 jurisdiction of the State Board of Community Colleges.  
18 (4) Vocational and technical school. – A school licensed as a proprietary school  
19 under G.S. 115D-90.

20 (b) Career Options. – The Authority shall, as data is available, provide information on  
21 projected employment needs in the labor ~~economy~~ economy in the State and in each prosperity  
22 zone of the State, including highest demand career areas, and associated salary ranges for those  
23 areas of employment, college majors which may fulfill those needs, and institutions of higher  
24 education that may provide those majors. The Authority may use existing sources of public  
25 information, such as the employment projections produced by the federal Department of Labor,  
26 Bureau of Labor Statistics, to develop this information.

27 (c) Major Options. – The Authority shall, as data is available, provide information based  
28 on aggregate data for outcomes of public and private institutions of higher education and  
29 vocational and technical schools in North Carolina. Outcome information for each public and  
30 private institution of higher education and vocational and technical school shall include, but is  
31 not limited to, the following:

- 32 (1) Completion rates within the expected number of semesters for the degree  
33 sought.  
34 (2) Transfer rates of students to other institutions.  
35 (2a) Average tuition for public and private institutions of higher education and  
36 vocational and technical schools.



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- 1 (3) Percentage of students receiving financial aid, by type of aid.  
 2 (4) Average and median amount of loan debt upon student graduation, by  
 3 ~~major-major, and among graduates from four-year institutions of higher~~  
 4 ~~education, community colleges, and vocational and technical schools.~~  
 5 (4a) Average monthly student loan payment from four-year institutions of higher  
 6 education, community colleges, and vocational and technical schools.  
 7 (5) Average and median salary, by ~~major-major, and among graduates from~~  
 8 ~~four-year institutions of higher education, community colleges, and vocational~~  
 9 ~~and technical schools.~~  
 10 (6) Percentage of graduates employed within six months of graduation, by  
 11 ~~major-major, and among graduates from four-year institutions of higher~~  
 12 ~~education, community colleges, and vocational and technical schools.~~  
 13 (7) Percentage of graduates enrolled in graduate school within six months of  
 14 graduation, by major.

15 (d) ~~Public and Private Institutions of Higher Education. For the purposes of this section,~~  
 16 ~~"public institutions of higher education" shall include the constituent institutions of The~~  
 17 ~~University of North Carolina and the community colleges under the jurisdiction of the State~~  
 18 ~~Board of Community Colleges and "private institutions of higher education" shall include~~  
 19 ~~postsecondary institutions that award postsecondary degrees, as defined in G.S. 116-15(a2)(1)."~~

20 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

21 "(41a) To Compile Data for the "Know Before You Go" Program. – The State Board  
 22 and the Department of Public Instruction shall collaborate with the  
 23 Department of Commerce and the Department of Labor in collecting data for  
 24 local boards of education to provide to sophomore students to enable them to  
 25 make informed decisions about postsecondary education choices and their  
 26 professional futures through the "Know Before You Go" programs under  
 27 G.S. 115C-47(34b)."

28 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

29 "(34b) To Provide Sophomores with "Know Before You Go" Information. – Each  
 30 local board of education shall provide for a program for students in their  
 31 sophomore year of high school with the information contained on the "Know  
 32 Before You Go" website pursuant to G.S. 116-209.16A and the information  
 33 compiled by the Department of Public Instruction under G.S. 115C-12(41a)  
 34 to allow students to make informed decisions about postsecondary education  
 35 choices and their professional futures."

36 **SECTION 4.** Through the longitudinal data system established pursuant to Chapter  
 37 116E of the General Statutes, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor, and the  
 38 Department of Public Instruction shall collect and compile data on an annual basis for the "Know  
 39 Before You Go" website maintained by the State Education Assistance Authority pursuant to  
 40 G.S. 116-209.16A and for the programs operated by local boards of education providing  
 41 information to students under G.S. 115C-47(34b). For purposes of this section, the definitions  
 42 provided in G.S. 116-209.16A(a1) shall apply. As soon as practicable, the data compiled shall  
 43 include at least the following:

- 44 (1) The most in-demand jobs in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State,  
 45 including starting salary and education level required for those jobs.  
 46 (2) The breakdown of average cost for all public and private institutions of higher  
 47 education and vocational and technical schools in the State, respectively.  
 48 (3) The average three-year student loan default rate for all public and private  
 49 institutions of higher education and vocational and technical schools in the  
 50 State.

- 1 (4) The average total student loan debt for in-State graduates of public and private  
2 institutions of higher education for four-year degrees and graduate programs.  
3 (5) The average graduation rate for all public and private institutions of higher  
4 education and vocational and technical schools in the State.  
5 (6) The completion rates for apprenticeship programs, high school credential  
6 programs, career and technical education programs, and military first-term  
7 enlistments.  
8 (7) The share of college graduates working in an occupation that does not require  
9 a college degree for each major.  
10 (8) The average starting salary in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State  
11 for individuals graduating from public and private institutions of higher  
12 education.  
13 (9) The average starting salary in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State  
14 for individuals that have completed an apprenticeship program, high school  
15 credential program, or career and technical education program.  
16 (10) The average starting salary in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State  
17 for individuals graduating from a vocational and technical school in the State.

18 **SECTION 5.(a)** Grant Program Established. – From the funds appropriated by  
19 subsection (b) of this section, the Department of Public Instruction shall establish the Career Path  
20 Options Grant Pilot Program for the 2025-2026 school year for local boards of education to apply  
21 for funds to provide students with the information required under G.S. 115C-47(34b), as enacted  
22 by this act, to make informed decisions about postsecondary education choices and their  
23 professional futures. The Department shall establish application criteria for grants. Grant funds  
24 shall be used to promote and distribute program materials, including printing and distribution  
25 costs. Funds may also be used for hiring or paying supplemental compensation to career coaches  
26 or career development coordinators to support students through the program.

27 **SECTION 5.(b)** Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to  
28 the Department of Public Instruction the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in  
29 nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to implement the grant program established by  
30 this section.

31 **SECTION 6.** Sections 1 and 3 of this act become effective January 1, 2026. Section  
32 5 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2025. The remainder of this act is effective when it  
33 becomes law.