



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Special Needs Pilot Program

Senate Bill 382 (S.L. 2024-57)

Date Due: June 30, 2025
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024-2025

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION

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PURPOSE

According to Senate Bill 382, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) shall contract with Amplio Learning Technologies, Inc., to create a new pilot (Program) for a special education digital intervention software platform to increase opportunities for students with special needs. The Program shall focus primarily on students receiving interventions for speech language and reading development, including English language learners, to provide more optimized progress for the intervention. To provide more effective and efficient opportunities for Medicaid billing for speech language pathologists (SLP) services and dyslexia-related services, the platform chosen should include digital evidence-based curricula specifically aligned to speech, language, and literacy intervention goals. The chosen solution should include real-time automatic measurements, data collection, and documentation, as well as goal tracking and administrative dashboards. The platform chosen should be a web-based application accessible on multiple devices allowing flexible application across classroom-based, small group, and individual intervention models and utilized by a variety of intervention team members, including special educators, SLPs, Reading Interventionists, SLP assistants, and educational aides.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) shall provide an *interim report* on the results of the Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and Fiscal Research Division by June 30, 2025.

The DPI shall report on the *final* result of the Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division by October 15, 2027.

The report shall include at least (i) a comparison of Medicaid reimbursements paid out to participating public school units (PSU) compared against public school units that did not participate in the Program and (ii) a comparison of Medicaid reimbursement paid out to public school units after participating in the Program compared against Medicaid reimbursements paid out to participating public school units prior to their participating in the Program.

INTERIM REPORT

Senate Bill 382 became law in October 2023. Alamance County Schools, Catawba County Schools, and Nash County Schools were the original participating public school units (PSUs) identified for the Program. In Spring 2024, due to resource challenges at that time, including

the timing of the law passage mid-school year and the training commitment related to upskilling to digital tools for daily workflow, the original PSUs notified DPI of their intent to not participate in the Program during the original pilot period. Shortly after, Amplio Learning Technologies Inc. secured Cabarrus County Schools, Union County Schools, and Vance County Schools as alternative pilot participants. A legislative update ultimately was passed when the revision to Senate Bill 382 went into effect in December 2024, updating the reporting date and named districts.

Since December 2024, the DPI and Amplio Learning Technologies, Inc., have been fully engaged in the contracting and procurement process with letters of support from the most recently named participating PSUs. At the time of this report, the Program has been assigned a requisition number, obtained approval through the DPI process, and is awaiting final approval from the NC Department of Information Technology. Once this occurs, DPI will seek final approval from the NC State Board of Education (NCSBE) to execute the planned contract. Assuming NCDIT and NCSBE approval is obtained, DPI and Amplio Learning Technologies, Inc. expect contract execution by June 30, 2025.

A total of \$975,000 in non-recurring state funds was appropriated for each year of the biennium (\$1,950,000 total) to support the implementation of the Program. However, due to changes in the named PSUs, the first-year funds were reverted in December 2024, because a contract could not be executed in time to initiate the study.

With the amended Senate bill passed only in December 2024, there is now a short timeline to encumber the second-year funds by June 30, 2025, with the newly named PSUs. If the contract for the Special Needs Pilot Program is not executed by this date, the remaining funds may revert, putting the entire Program at risk and preventing the timely completion of the study required for the October 15, 2027, reporting deadline.

FOR CONSIDERATION

To ensure the study can proceed, a budget amendment to secure these non-recurring funds may need to be considered to fund the Program for a full 2-year term.