

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DRAFT REPORT TO THE 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 1, 2020

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER

December 1, 2020

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The **JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**, respectfully submits the following report to the 2021 General Assembly.

Sen. Deanna Ballard (Co-Chair)

Rep. Hugh Blackwell (Co-Chair)

Rep. D. Craig Horn (Co-Chair)

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COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

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The Committee on Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee met six times after the 2019 Regular Session. The following is a brief summary of the Committee's proceedings. Detailed minutes and information from each Committee meeting are available in the Legislative Library.

February 4, 2020

Educator Preparation Programs

Overview of Educator Preparation Program Recent Legislation (SB 599/HB 107)

Brian Gwyn, Legislative Analysis Division

Implementation of SB 599 (Excellent Educators in Every Classroom)

Dr. Thomas Tomberlin, Director of Educator Recruitment and Support, DPI

Dr. Andrew Sioberg, Director of Educator Preparation, DPI

Dr. Patrick Miller, Chair, Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission and Superintendent, Greene County Schools

Proposed Weighted Performance Model for Educator Preparation Programs

Dr. Thomas Tomberlin, Director of Educator Recruitment and Support, DPI

Dr. Andrew Sioberg, Director of Educator Preparation, DPI

Dr. Patrick Miller, Chair, Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission and Superintendent, Greene County Schools

Educator Preparation Program Perspective on Implementation

Dave Saba, Chief Development Officer, Teachers of Tomorrow

Dr. Chris Godwin, Director of Teacher Education, School of Education at Campbell University and President, North Carolina Association for Colleges and Teacher Educators

Dr. Melba Spooner, Dean, Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University

Brian Gwyn was unable to attend the meeting so Kara McCraw, Committee Counsel, gave an overview presentation on recent legislation related to Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). S.L. 2017-189 (SB 599) created the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) to recommend standards for educator preparation, licensure, continuing education, and conduct to the State Board of Education (SBE), as well as created mandatory sanctions for EPPs that fail to meet performance standards. S.L. 2019-149 (HB 107) made changes to statutes governing EPPs with regard to performance standards and measures, modified the criteria by which an EPP can be sanctioned, directed the SBE to adopt a rule creating a small group reporting exception any time data are at risk of being individually identifiable, and required the State Board to propose to the Joint

Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) a performance-based weighted model for EPPs.

Dr. Thomas Tomberlin, Director of Educator Recruitment and Support at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), provided an update on the implementation of SB 599 and the general feedback that the Department has received. According to Dr. Tomberlin, there have been no strong negative feelings about the Residency License model. There are some concerns regarding support for less common licensure areas, an increase in the complexity of processing licenses, and the ability to meet the December 15th reporting deadline due to teacher effectiveness data not being available until November of each year. Dr. Tomberlin informed the committee that the SBE has approved five EPPs since the implementation of SB 599. He had the following legislative suggestions: (i) exempt DPI from the rulemaking process for the purpose of licensure; (ii) create multiple pathways to establish competency to teach, such as using teacher classroom performance as opposed to the ability to pass the licensure exams; (iii) extend the reporting deadline from December to April; and (iv) clarify whether there is a need for a static annual EPP report card in addition to the interactive dashboard with the same information. Dr. Tomberlin also reviewed the preservice requirements for the Residency License and the Emergency License, as well as the additional pedagogy requirements established in SB 599.

Dr. Andrew Sioberg, Director of Educator Preparation at DPI, presented on HB 107. The three accountability measures established by SB 599 and modified by HB 107 are: (i) annual teacher evaluations; (ii) student proficiency and growth; and (iii) results from an educator satisfaction survey, performed at the end of the educator's first year of teaching. Each measure is assessed over three years of data, and is disaggregated into subgroups to include race, sex and ethnicity, with a minimum sample size of 10. There would be a small group exception for when an EPP's subgroup falls below the minimum sample size of 10 during the three years to prevent individual students from being identified from the data. Dr. Sioberg talked about the SBE's requirement to develop a proposed performance-based weighted model to compare the annual report card information between each program. In response to that requirement, Dr. Sioberg discussed the PEPSC's recommended model, which included, in addition to the three required accountability measures, a fourth accountability measure to be used as a pilot. This fourth accountability measure, diversity, would be reported but would not be incorporated into the EPP's overall performance score. Dr. Sioberg reviewed the differences between the weighted performance model and the existing accountability framework, and how the proposed model would impact the process for sanctioning a program. Dr. Tomberlin and Dr. Sioberg answered questions from the Committee.

Dave Saba, Chief Development Officer for Teachers of Tomorrow, presented a status update on North Carolina Teachers of Tomorrow. Mr. Saba shared that Teachers of Tomorrow is one of the largest teacher preparation programs in the country. The program was approved to prepare teachers in North Carolina 18 months ago and has so far produced 141 licensed educators, in the following licensure areas: English (10%), Math (11%), Science (11%), Social Studies (13%), Elementary Education (33%), and Exceptional Children (22%). According to Mr. Saba, the overall application and approval process was

smooth, and it has been easy to work with the local school administrative units (LEAs). Some of the challenges they have encountered are with individuals pursuing licensure without having full knowledge of the recent changes in licensure, lag time in license processing, and having to develop course content for smaller licensure areas. Mr. Saba answered questions from the Committee.

Dr. Chris Godwin, Director of Teacher Education at the School of Education at Campbell University, presented on the impact of SB 599, including revisions that the University has made to its program since the implementation of the law. In the spring of 2017, Campbell began to re-examine its teacher education program and did the following: began using Schema Sheets, which give students direction and recommendations for continuous improvement; selected edTPA for its subject-specific pedagogy assessment; and examined pedagogy courses to ensure deep understanding of the student population in Harnett County and surrounding LEAs. Student placement is governed by Memorandums of Agreement between the University and the LEAs, and most of the clinical placements are in rural areas and Title I schools. Campbell's teacher preparation program provides one-third of the teachers in Harnett County. The University has developed its own program called Teaching Scholars, which is a scholarship program designed to increase student diversity and address the need for teachers in rural areas. Dr. Godwin further reviewed the alternative licensure programs offered at Campbell, the different ways the University evaluates its program and effectiveness, the minimum admissions requirements for EPPs, and content and pedagogy requirements. Dr. Godwin answered questions from the Committee.

Dr. Melba Spooner, Dean of the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University, presented on the College's program. Dr. Spooner talked about the extensive process educator preparation programs had to go through to receive State approval and accreditation in the past and said the new online reporting system is more effective and allows them to spend more time on teacher preparation. She spoke about the implementation of SB 599 and what is being done to meet new requirements, where the College has seen room for improvement in its program, challenges it has faced, and what the College is doing to address those challenges. Dr. Spooner answered questions from the Committee.

March 6, 2020

Child Nutrition

School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program

Dr. Lynn Harvey, Director of School Nutrition and District Operations, Department of Public Instruction

Community Eligibility Program

Amy M. Stanley, Director of School Nutrition, Bladen County Schools

Beth Maynard, Executive Director, Child Nutrition Services, Cumberland County Schools

No Kid Hungry North Carolina

Julie Pittman, Educator Outreach Manager, No Kid Hungry North Carolina

Perkins Reauthorization and CTE

DPI's perspective

Trey Michael, Director of Career and Technical Education, Department of Public Instruction

Alexis Schauss, Chief Business Officer, Department of Public Instruction

LEAs' Perspectives

Chris Bailey, Director of Career and Technical Education, Onslow County Schools

Nancy Cross, Director of Career and Technical Education, Randolph County Schools

Dr. Lynn Harvey, Director of School Nutrition and District Operations at DPI, spoke to the Committee regarding the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). North Carolina has the seventh largest School Nutrition Program in the country. School nutrition programs are intended to be partnerships among the federal, state and local governments. Dr. Harvey went over the student eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meal assistance and the costs associated with these services. Approximately 60% of students enrolled in North Carolina's public schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals and many more struggle with hunger because they live in economically distressed households but do not qualify for meal benefits at schools. She reviewed funding sources and expenses in the School Nutrition Programs and explained the role the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) plays in school nutrition. CEP, under the NSLP, allows schools and local school administrative units (LEAs) to provide breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge to the student, regardless of the student's economic status, which eliminates the burden of collecting household applications to determine eligibility for school meal programs. Schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals, which is based on their participation in other means-tested programs. Academically, students who experience food insecurity and hunger are more likely to have reduced cognition, limited attention spans, more behavioral problems, and have lower standardized test scores. Dr. Harvey concluded her presentation by informing the Committee that School Nutrition Programs are an important part of the instructional day because they provide students with the fuel and nutrients needed to concentrate, learn and succeed. Dr. Harvey answered questions from the Committee.

Amy Stanley, Director of School Nutrition for Bladen County Schools, spoke to the Committee about Bladen County's participation in CEP. All schools in the county are CEP participants, allowing all students to have access to meals free of charge. By participating in CEP, schools are now able to buy equipment that the district could not previously afford because the LEA's reimbursable dollars-per-student have increased. The LEA has also implemented a summer meal and book program to help provide meals and books to keep students engaged throughout the summer.

Beth Maynard, Executive Director of Child Nutrition Services for Cumberland County Schools, spoke next about her LEA's experience with CEP. The LEA saw an increase in CEP participation after Hurricane Matthew (2016) and Hurricane Florence (2018), doubling the participation number from 32 schools in the 2015-16 school year to 65 schools in the 2019-20 school year. Of the 87 schools in the LEA, 65 now participate in CEP. Ms. Maynard explained to the Committee the steps followed for school selection and the benefits the schools have seen since CEP was implemented.

Ms. Stanley and Ms. Maynard answered questions from the Committee.

Julie Pittman, Educator Outreach Manager for No Kid Hungry, spoke to the Committee about the organization's efforts to end student hunger. No Kid Hungry works with a network of private citizens, lawmakers, business leaders, and community groups to increase access to existing nutrition programs that provide school breakfasts, summer meals, and afterschool meals. It also teaches families in need how to cook healthy and affordable meals. Ms. Pittman informed the Committee that hunger is an education, economic, and health issue in North Carolina, with 20% of kids growing up in a family that struggles with hunger. In 2019, No Kid Hungry commissioned a study that found that serving breakfast after the school bell can reduce absenteeism by an average of six percentage points, as well as improve reading test scores. For elementary school students, the study found that serving breakfast after the bell can reduce anxiety, loneliness, and low self-esteem. Ms. Pittman reviewed the following three innovative models that have proven to be the most effective at meeting the needs of students and ensuring students are able to start the day with a healthy meal: (i) Breakfast in the Classroom – breakfast is served and eaten in the classroom; (ii) Grab and Go – breakfast is served from one or more locations in the school and eaten either in the classroom or common area; and (iii) Second Chance Breakfast – breakfast is served between 1st and 2nd period, either via Grab and Go or common area, allowing students time to eat before returning to class. Ms. Pittman encouraged the Committee to implement effective state policies and work with DPI, LEAs, and educators to help improve outcomes for all children across North Carolina. Ms. Pittman then answered questions from the Committee.

The Committee then heard from Alexis Schauss, Chief Business Officer at DPI, and Trey Michael, Director of Career and Technical Education at DPI, regarding Perkins V and Career and Technical Education (CTE). Ms. Schauss explained to the Committee that North Carolina's Perkins V grants are split between Public Schools (55.9%), Community Colleges (29.1%), and Administrative and State Activities (15%). In fiscal year 2019-20, North Carolina's federal CTE funding accounted for 5% of the amount spent, and 95% was State-based funding. LEAs generally use federal Perkins funds for equipment, supplies and technology to support CTE instruction and activities, and State funds are used for CTE certified instructional personnel employment, developing, expanding and improving CTE programs, and for grade expansion grants.

Mr. Michael provided the Committee with an overview of the major changes between Perkins IV and V. Perkins V gives states and LEAs more flexibility to improve and expand CTE programs. One of the most significant changes is the new requirement for a

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment that requires data-driven decision making regarding local spending. There is now more focus on employability skills and the need to prepare students for in-demand industry occupations and ensure that students are getting the CTE training that will have the most impact on the local community's needs. In order to achieve these targets, Perkins V also requires more involvement from stakeholders. Finally, there is now an emphasis on career awareness activities to begin as early as fifth grade.

Ms. Schauss and Mr. Michael answered questions from the Committee.

The Committee next heard from Chris Bailey, Director of Career and Technical Education for Onslow County Schools, who presented to the Committee from the LEA's perspective. Onslow County Schools offers 130 CTE courses. While historically the Perkins Act focused on high school students, Perkins V now includes middle schools. Mr. Bailey explained to the Committee that about half of federal Perkins funds go towards equipment for programs, supplies, and materials, while State funding allows for more flexibility as to how funds are spent. One issue the LEA has noticed is the increase in the number of subscriptions for software and curriculum resources. He noted that the annual recurring costs for software memberships and updates has decreased the amount of funds available for large equipment replacement and upgrades or program expansion. Expanding CTE programs to middle schools has also increased expenses because LEAs now have to consider additional staffing to cover those grades.

Finally, the Committee heard from Nancy Cross, Director of Career and Technical Education for Randolph County, on her LEA's experience with Perkins V. Ms. Cross explained to the Committee that the LEA begins its CTE program in elementary school by partnering with community members and bringing them to the schools for presentations on career options within the community. Ms. Cross reviewed the top ten enrolled program areas in CTE, with the top five courses being food and nutrition, agriscience, construction, child development, and healthcare. Ms. Cross explained to the Committee that when students have a goal, they are more likely to stay involved and complete high school, and 100% of students who are CTE completers graduate on time. Ms. Cross ended her presentation with the following considerations for the Committee: (i) expand funding for personnel, (ii) increase funding for fees for credentials, (iii) provide budget consistency to allow LEAs to have a better idea of the funding they are working with to better prepare for the future, and (iv) ensure a Career Development Coordinator is at every high school.

Mr. Bailey and Ms. Cross answered questions from the Committee.

March 11, 2020

Computer Coding in the Schools

Update on wireless and broadband access in North Carolina Public Schools

Chris Beal, VP Security Initiatives and Chief Information Security Officer, MCNC

Ray Zeisz, Director, Technology Infrastructure, Friday Institute for Education Innovation

Update on Computer Curriculum Implementation by DPI

Mary Hemphill, Director, K-12 Computer Science and Technology Education, Department of Public Instruction

Girls Who Code

Corinne Roller, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, Girls Who Code

Retirement Models for Teachers

National Perspective

Anthony Randazzo, Executive Director, Equable Institute

State's Perspective

David Vanderweide, Fiscal Research, NCGA

Chris Beal, Vice President of Security Initiatives and Chief Information Security Officer at MCNC, gave an update to the Committee on wireless and broadband access in North Carolina. MCNC owns and operates over 4,000 miles of fiber-optic network infrastructure that provides internet access to every LEA in North Carolina, as well as universities and community colleges, State and local governments, libraries, research institutions, healthcare institutions, and non-profits through the North Carolina Research and Education Network (NCREN). Mr. Beal introduced Ray Zeisz, Director of Technology Infrastructure at the Friday Institute for Education Innovation, who talked about the School Connectivity Initiative (SCI). The SCI aims to provide equitable, high-quality internet access to every school, regardless of geographic location or economic status, at the lowest possible cost. Mr. Zeisz talked about the E-Rate program, how it works, and how the funding received is distributed to support Wi-Fi access within all schools, support WAN at the district level and NCREN at the State level. Mr. Beal then addressed the Committee again about cybersecurity and the challenges MCNC faces preventing cyber-attacks. Mr. Beal shared with the Committee two examples of cyber-attacks that occurred to education institutions in North Carolina in the last year, how disruptive the attacks were, and what MCNC is doing to build and implement a stronger cybersecurity foundation across networks.

Mr. Beal and Mr. Zeisz answered questions from the Committee.

Dr. Mary Hemphill, Director of K-12 Computer Science and Technology Education at DPI, provided an update on the Department's computer curriculum implementation. Dr. Hemphill informed the Committee that it is estimated that by the year 2026, the world will need more than two million computer scientists to maintain and protect the data we rely upon, and no matter how technology transforms the job market, computer science expertise will be an important skill for success. Dr. Hemphill reviewed some of the findings and recommendations from a study requested by the General Assembly in 2017 to expand computer science opportunities to all students in North Carolina K-12 schools. DPI has mobilized and organized stakeholders into teams across the State to help develop and implement a computer science curriculum that focuses on different proposed standards as

students move from elementary school to middle and high school. The five core concepts of computer science standards that DPI will be launching for the 2020-21 school year are (i) computing systems, (ii) networks and the internet, (iii) data and analysis, (iv) algorithms and programming, and (v) impacts of computing. Dr. Hemphill reviewed some of the frequent questions that come up regarding computer science, what DPI is doing to address the gender gap in the field, and the next steps and opportunities for North Carolina's computer science initiative. Dr. Hemphill answered questions from the Committee.

Corinne Roller, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for Girls Who Code, was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Roller's presentation materials were distributed to Committee members and the public without further discussion.

Anthony Randazzo, Executive Director of Equable Institute, talked to the Committee about the different retirement models for teachers that exist across the nation and which state follows which model. The retirement models for teachers or school employees are as follows:

- Pension – A formally defined benefit plan. The benefit defined is a guaranteed fixed income in retirement that is based on the number of years worked and the employee's average salary during the final years of employment. The majority of states offer this model.
- Guaranteed Return Plan (GRP) –The employee and employer both make contributions to a central fund during their working years and the employer invests on behalf of the employee and guarantees the employee will earn a certain amount on the investments. The employee can convert the accumulated savings into an income upon retirement. Kansas and New York City offer this model to teachers.
- Defined Contribution Plan (DC) – The employee and employer both make contributions to an individual account, and the individual accounts are invested in one of several professionally designed and managed funds. Some DCs allow employees to convert savings into a guaranteed monthly pension check. Alaska is the only state that only offers this model to teachers.
- Hybrid Plans – These plans mix and match elements of multiple designs into a "hybrid" structure, such as pairing pension and DC plans. States that offer a Hybrid-only model are Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.
- Choice – This model allows teachers to choose the retirement plan they prefer. States that allow this option are Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Utah.

Mr. Randazzo then reviewed the pros and cons of each retirement model and concluded that the best way to figure out the best option for each state is to bring in stakeholders and work together. Mr. Randazzo answered questions from the Committee.

Lastly, the Committee heard from David Vanderweide, from the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division, on the State's perspective on pension reform. The Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS) covers all State employees, including the employees of the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina (UNC),

community colleges, LEAs and some charter schools. North Carolina's retirement model is a traditional pension plan and the benefits are the same for all covered groups, except for law enforcement officers who have an earlier retirement age, and UNC employees who can choose an Optional Retirement Program. Mr. Vanderweide reviewed a list of recent pension bills introduced in the General Assembly that would have had a significant impact on TSERS and the status of each bill. He also reviewed the impact North Carolina's retirement model has on attracting and retaining both younger and older teachers, and shared recommendations to keep in mind when considering pension reforms. Mr. Vanderweide answered questions from the Committee.

September 1, 2020

Update on myFutureNC

Dale Jenkins, Chair, myFutureNC Board of Directors
Cecilia Holden, President and CEO, myFutureNC

**Presentations on the North Carolina Virtual Public School Performance Audit
State Auditor's Office**

Beth A. Wood, State Auditor

Department of Public Instruction/ State Board of Education

Eric Davis, Chairman, State Board of Education
Dr. Beverly Emory, Deputy Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction
Eliz Colbert, Executive Director, North Carolina Virtual Public Schools

Dale Jenkins, Chair of the myFutureNC of Board of Directors gave a brief introduction of the organization and its goal to improve education attainment in North Carolina.

Cecilia Holden, President and CEO of myFutureNC spoke next to the Committee about the organization's actions to address the talent crisis facing the State. Currently, half of North Carolina employers cite a lack of employability skills and technical skills as concerns, and projections show that at least 67% of jobs in North Carolina will require a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree. It is myFutureNC's goal to have 2 million North Carolinians hold a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by the year 2030, representing one of the highest educational attainment targets in the nation. To support this effort, myFutureNC established the following three organizational goals: (i) A Shared Vision for Attainment – all stakeholders have a shared vision for education across North Carolina, from early childhood through adulthood; (ii) Postsecondary Readiness, Access & Completion – alignment between local and State actions to increase attainment of valuable credentials and postsecondary degrees; and (iii) Education & Labor Market Alignment – aligning the State's educational attainment efforts directly with the State's talent needs and industry trends. myFutureNC partnered with Carolina Demography to create a State Attainment Dashboard and one hundred individual County Attainment Profiles with data identifying the largest opportunities for growth and improvement across the State, as well as specific to an individual county. Ms. Holden shared with the

Committee myFutureNC's work moving forward and policy recommendations they would like the General Assembly to consider.

Ms. Holden and Mr. Jenkins answered questions from the Committee.

The Committee next heard presentations on the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) Performance Audit. State Auditor Beth A. Wood presented to the Committee first. Ms. Wood informed the Committee that the NCVPS audit was performed after her office was contacted by parents concerned with NCVPS' course content and quality and explained that the audit was performed to determine whether NCVPS course content and design is compliant with content and design standards for online courses, and whether NCVPS monitors the course quality in accordance with recognized standards and best practices for online courses.

Ms. Wood informed the Committee that of the 133 unique courses offered by NCVPS, 98 were subject to the audit and a total of 12 courses were selected for the audit. Ms. Wood reviewed the following findings and provided examples for each finding: (i) 8 out of 12 courses did not meet the required curriculum content standards required by State law and NCVPS policy; (ii) 11 of 12 courses had no assurance that they met NCVPS adopted standards for cognitive rigor; (iii) teacher evaluations are not performed consistently and in accordance with policy; and (iv) courses were not properly cited to avoid copyright violations.

Ms. Wood answered questions from the Committee.

The Committee then heard from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE) in response to the NCVPS audit. Eric Davis, Chairman of the SBE, addressed the Committee to assure them that every item listed in the audit will be taken into consideration and used for improvements.

The Committee next heard from Dr. Beverly Emory, Deputy Superintendent at DPI. Dr. Emory shared with the Committee that steps were taken quickly to address issues raised after an internal audit was done in 2017 and the NCVPS audit being discussed. Dr. Emory said that DPI sets the standards for courses and it is up to the public school units to hire, train, and work with teachers and monitor classroom instruction. After the audit, DPI purchased a new authenticity software to address copyright concerns and developed a new observation tool that is now part of formal evaluation process. The DPI has always used a content alignment document as a curriculum map, and it is DPI's goal to expedite "Quality Matters" review of all courses as recommended. Two of the twelve audited courses have been through the revised internal process and will use those results to continue making improvements. Dr. Emory said that one of the ways DPI is looking to improve is by asking for peer review by other virtual schools and by providing quarterly updates to the SBE on the monitoring of areas identified by the audit. Dr. Emory said the NCVPS has been a lifesaver during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for seniors who needed courses to graduate.

Chairman Davis and Dr. Emory answered questions from the Committee.

October 6, 2020

Update on Micro-credentials

The Honorable Bev Perdue, Chair and Founder of digiLEARN, and former Governor of the State of North Carolina
Angela Quick, Vice President, Education and Workforce Development, RTI International

Implementation of Remote Instruction

Dr. David Stegall, Deputy Superintendent of Innovation, NC Department of Public Instruction.
Dr. Vanessa Wrenn, Director, Digital Teaching and Learning, NC Department of Public Instruction
Sneha Shah-Coltrane, Director, Advanced Learning and Gifted Education, NC Department of Public Instruction

Update on Apprenticeship NC Program

Maureen Little, Vice President, Economic Development, NC Community College System

The October 6, 2020, meeting began with an update on micro-credentials. Governor Bev Perdue, Chair and founder of digiLEARN, spoke to the Committee regarding the North Carolina Partnership for Micro-credentials. Governor Perdue introduced the concept of micro-credentials and the need for the Partnership, and further explained how micro-credentials can be used to improve and expand teacher professional learning.

Angela Quick, Vice President of Education and Workforce Development for RTI International, next provided additional information about the Partnership and workplan. The Partnership was established for the purpose of developing a state-recognized system of competency-based micro-credentials that promotes and is integrated with a high-quality system of teacher professional learning. The Partnership has formed a Task Force which includes the Department of Public Instruction, to carry out a workplan. The workplan includes developing a report around a comprehensive national review of the micro-credentials work, completing a North Carolina feasibility study about micro-credentials, leading a series of stakeholder meetings across the State in connection with partner meetings, and developing and administering a statewide online survey to stakeholders to get feedback about micro-credentials, licensure, and professional development. The Partnership plans to continue executing the work plan to gather data, collaborate on recommendations, and report those recommendations to the Committee, the State Board of Education, and the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission.

Governor Perdue and Ms. Quick both answered questions from the Committee.

The Committee next heard information on the implementation of remote instruction.

Dr. David Stegall, Deputy Superintendent of Innovation with the Department of Public Instruction, provided an introduction and overview of the report on remote instruction plans, which was required by S.L. 2020-3.

Sneha Shah-Coltrane, Director of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education with the Department of Public Instruction, next shared additional information on the report's structure, including responses from all public school units (PSUs) on specific components of the PSU remote learning plan. Ms. Shah-Coltrane informed the Committee about the strengths of the plans, including positive participation in professional development, alignment of best practices across the PSUs, support from teachers and the community, expansion of device access, and greater access to digital content and learning management systems.

Dr. Vanessa Wrenn, Director of Digital Teaching and Learning with the Department of Public Instruction, then shared some of the challenges of the plans, including lack of internet access for many families, lack of time to develop teacher readiness, insufficient devices for one-to-one instruction, additional funding needs to address new challenges caused by the pandemic, and challenges in supporting families with other needs, such as childcare.

Dr. Wrenn next reviewed some of the statewide trends from the plans. These included the use of live, synchronous, and asynchronous lessons, as well as different approaches for connectivity, including the expanded usage of mobile wi-fi hotspots and alternatives for non-connected households. Dr. Wrenn noted that creative solutions were developed using existing resources, such as repurposing of infrastructure. Dr. Wrenn also discussed trends related to digital resources and platforms, including more one-to-one computing and the use of consistent learning management systems and digital content across PSUs. She also spoke about the need for more professional development for remote instruction and digital tools and devices, and heightened concerns regarding supporting certain age groups and special classifications of students in remote instruction.

Ms. Shah-Coltrane next shared some of the ongoing supports provided by the Department, including coaching and technical assistance, specific supports for special classifications of students, professional learning opportunities and remote instruction resources, and the Lighting the Way Forward Guidebook on reopening schools. Dr. Wrenn concluded with additional information on new developments in connectivity in partnership with the Friday Institute.

Dr. Stegall, Ms. Shah-Coltrane, and Dr. Wrenn answered questions from the Committee.

The Committee next heard an update on the ApprenticeshipNC Program from Maureen Little, the Vice-President of Economic Development for the NC Community College System. Ms. Little provided an overview of the ApprenticeshipNC Program and registered apprenticeships, and the advantages the program brings to apprentices, employers, community colleges, and the State. Ms. Little shared information on the program's history,

structure, and funding. She also provided statistics on the number of students served by the program and the areas of industry for both, registered apprenticeships and youth apprenticeships.

Ms. Little concluded by answering questions from the Committee.

The materials for all presentations can be found on the Committee's [website](#).

December 1, 2020

DRAFT

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on information presented to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee during their regularly scheduled meetings, the Committee makes the following findings and recommendations to the 2021 General Assembly:

School Lunch Periods

The Committee finds that although healthy school lunches are essential to help students succeed academically in school, the amount of time that students have to eat their lunches is also of great importance. National groups such as the School Nutrition Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that students be given at least twenty minutes for eating lunch after being seated. The Committee acknowledges the various pressures on school leaders in planning the school day and understands the logistical impediments they face in ensuring adequate instructional time, time for physical activity, and cafeteria space limitations. However, the Committee strongly encourages local boards of education, local school administrative units, school principals, teachers, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively to find ways to ensure that all students have adequate time to eat lunch.

Breakfast Served after the School Bell

The Committee finds that students who are hungry may be more likely to have difficulty concentrating, more behavioral problems, and lower standardized test scores. The Committee acknowledges that for the 2018-2019 school year, the percentage of eligible students who participated in the National School Lunch Program was 56.24%, while only 30.24% of eligible students participated in the School Breakfast Program. The Committee recognizes the pressure on school leaders to ensure adequate instructional time when planning the school day. However, to provide more students with access to a healthy meal to start the day, the Committee strongly encourages school leaders, including local superintendents and principals, to allow breakfast to be served after the school bell and in classrooms.

Meal Debt

The Committee finds that many local school administrative units (LEAs) end the year with unpaid meal debt, and that for the 2018-2019 school year, the total statewide debt was \$1.9 million. The Committee recognizes that LEAs have the authority to adopt policies regarding the service of meals, including the provision of alternate meals, to students who have not paid. The Committee looks forward to receiving more information from the State Board of Education in the report that it will submit to the Committee by October 15, 2021, pursuant to Section 2.3 of S.L. 2020-80. The information will include the following: (i)

the percentage of students of all grade levels in each LEA who qualify for and participate in reduced-price meals and do not carry an unpaid meal charge, (ii) the total amount of debt carried by each LEA related to unpaid meal charges, (iii) summaries of approaches adopted by each LEA regarding unpaid meal charges, and (iv) options for a statewide policy on the uniform administration of unpaid meal charges in LEAs, with each option ensuring that students are not prevented from receiving nutritious meals because of an unpaid meal charge.

The Committee commends the 2020 General Assembly for re-directing \$3.9 million dollars to provide for school lunches at no cost to students of all grade levels qualifying for reduced-price meals in all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program for the 2020-2021 school year, as well as giving the Department of Public Instruction the authority to use excess funds from the National School Breakfast Program to also cover these costs in case the appropriation is insufficient. The Committee also commends the 2020 General Assembly for appropriating \$75 million dollars from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund for emergency school nutrition services, including innovative school meals, provided to students in response to COVID-19 by public school units participating in the National School Lunch Program, National School Breakfast Program, or Summer Food Service Program from March 16, 2020, through December 30, 2020.

Career and Technical Education

The Committee finds that career and technical education (CTE) is an important factor in ensuring that students are career and college ready and supporting the goal for postsecondary educational attainment established by the State. The Committee finds that the State continues to provide substantial support for CTE, supplemented by federal funds from the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins). The Committee finds that, in 2019-2020, the State provided 95% of funding allocated for CTE, including funding for months of employment for CTE certified instructional personnel, funding for developing, expanding, and improving CTE programs, and funding for grade expansion grants. Perkins funds provided the remaining 5% of funds allocated for CTE, the majority of which are used for equipment and supplies. The Committee finds that Perkins funds are used to support CTE for both secondary schools and community colleges, and it encourages the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges to continue to work cooperatively and collaboratively to maximize the effectiveness of this funding.

Digital Learning Access

The Committee finds that digital learning and access to the Internet have become critically important in public education for the State for both K-12 and higher education, especially in light of the recent challenges created with remote learning during COVID-19. Indeed, myFutureNC, which is a cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government, also emphasizes the important connection between educational attainment and access to the Internet and fully encourages efforts to expand access and affordability to Internet services throughout the State. Furthermore, the Committee finds that although the State has made significant progress in ensuring school connectivity, with fiber to every school and Wi-Fi in every classroom, challenges still

remain in ensuring student digital learning access outside of school. The Committee notes that accurate and current information is needed to continue to address this problem.

The Committee commends the 2020 General Assembly for appropriating monies from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund for the following items to increase digital learning access for elementary and secondary students and school personnel: (i) \$1 million dollars for the purchase of extended reach mobile Wi-Fi gateway router devices in schools buses; (ii) \$21 million dollars to purchase devices to provide community and home mobile Internet access points; (iii) \$30 million dollars for the purchase of computers or other electronic devices for use by students; and (iv) \$5 million dollars for the purchase of computers or other electronic devices for use by school personnel. In addition, the following amounts were appropriated for institutions of higher education: (i) \$44 million dollars to The University of North Carolina from which monies could be used to cover increased costs related to moving coursework and exams online and necessary eligible expenses for assistance to students and employees such as information technology support; (ii) \$25 million dollars the North Carolina Community College System from which monies could be used to cover increased costs associated with moving to online education as well as cover expenses for expanded demands on information technology such as devices for campuses in rural areas; and (iii) \$25 million dollars to North Carolina's Independent Colleges and Universities from which monies could be used to transition to online education for students.

The Committee recommends that public school units annually report information on student digital learning access both at school and at home to a digital learning dashboard to provide timely and accurate information to better address this issue. The Committee also recommends the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Information Technology collaborate and work with stakeholders to review data obtained through remote learning necessitated by COVID-19 to make recommendations on how to close the student digital learning access gap for all students and educators.

See Attached Legislative Proposal 2019-TCz-27

Federal E-rate Funding

The Committee finds that federal E-rate funding remains a significant component in the School Connectivity Initiative, and that fully leveraging these federal funds provides a significant return, with each dollar of State appropriations for matching funds resulting in a value of \$2.81 to public school units. To ensure that federal E-rate funds can be fully leveraged, the Committee encourages the State Board of Education to determine the amount of funding needed to fully leverage federal e-rate funds and include this information as part of its annual budget request to the General Assembly.

Cybersecurity for Public Schools

The Committee finds that cybersecurity threats to school connectivity are an increasingly persistent issue that many public school units lack the resources and expertise to meet. The Committee believes that cybersecurity is best addressed statewide by leveraging highly skilled expertise and centrally located resources to address these

aggressive threats collectively, rather than in a piecemeal fashion by individual public school units. The Committee finds that the unique nature of the State's connectivity through the North Carolina Research and Education Network provides the opportunity for a centralized statewide approach to cyberprotection to better secure access for all public education. The Committee encourages future cybersecurity efforts and funding to focus on comprehensive statewide efforts rather than intermittent local attempts to address these complex issues. Finally, The Committee commends the 2020 General Assembly for appropriating \$4.5 million dollars from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund for: (i) the establishment of a statewide shared cybersecurity infrastructure to protect school business systems and minimize instructional disruption and (ii) school system cybersecurity monitoring and support in consultation with the School Connectivity Initiative.

Computer Science

The Committee finds that teaching and student learning of computational thinking and computer science in North Carolina public schools is necessary to ensure career and college readiness of students, and recognizes the work of the State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Department of Public Instruction, and its partners and collaborators, in the continued development of the NC K-12 Computer Science Standards. The Committee finds that additional information on continued implementation of computer science standards is needed for ongoing monitoring of this important effort, and recommends the General Assembly enact a requirement for an annual report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide more granular information on computer science implementation.

See Attached Legislative Proposal 2019-TCz-28

myFutureNC

The Committee finds that the myFutureNC Commission (Commission) is doing valuable and strategic work focusing on educational attainment in North Carolina through a cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. The Committee commends the Commission for its work and the goal of having two million North Carolinians between the ages of 25-44 to hold a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by the year 2030 which represents one of the highest educational targets in the nation. The Committee strongly supports the following recommendations of the Commission: (i) expand access to broadband throughout the State; (ii) increase support for Career and College Ready graduates; (iii) increase awareness and access to advising on career and college pathways and federal financial aid; (iv) make changes to public need-based financial aid programs to incentivize degree completion, retention, and on-time graduation; and (v) define, standardize, and incentivize non-degree workforce credentials to align with in-demand jobs. The Committee strongly encourages the General Assembly to consider legislative solutions to address these recommendations of the Commission.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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2019-2020

President Pro Tempore of the Senate
Appointments:

Sen. Deanna Ballard (Co-Chair)

Sen. Rick Horner (Vice-Chair)

Sen. Rob Bryan

Sen. David W. Craven, Jr.

Sen. Don Davis

Sen. Kathy Harrington

Sen. Todd Johnson

Sen. Joyce Krawiec

Sen. Tom McInnis

Sen. Gladys A. Robinson

Sen. Joyce Waddell

Speaker of the House of Representatives
Appointments:

Rep. Hugh Blackwell (Co-Chair),
Rep. D. Craig Horn (Co-Chair)

Rep. Jeffrey Elmore (Vice-Chair)

Rep. John A. Fraley (Vice-Chair)

Rep. Pat B. Hurley (Vice-Chair)

Rep. John Sauls (Vice-Chair)

Rep. Cecil Brockman

Rep. Ashton Wheeler Clemmons

Rep. Holly Grange

Rep. Howard J. Hunter, III

Rep. Marvin W. Lucas

COMMITTEE CHARGE/STATUTORY AUTHORITY

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Article 12H.

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

§ 120-70.80. Creation and membership of Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee is established. The Committee consists of 22 members as follows:

- (1) Eleven members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, at least three of whom are members of the minority party; and
- (2) Eleven members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, at least three of whom are members of the minority party.

Terms on the Committee are for two years and begin on the convening of the General Assembly in each odd-numbered year. Members may complete a term of service on the Committee even if they do not seek reelection or are not reelected to the General Assembly, but resignation or removal from service in the General Assembly constitutes resignation or removal from service on the Committee.

A member continues to serve until his successor is appointed. A vacancy shall be filled within 30 days by the officer who made the original appointment.

§ 120-70.81. Purpose and powers of Committee.

(a) The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee shall examine, on a continuing basis, the several educational institutions in North Carolina, in order to make ongoing recommendations to the General Assembly on ways to improve public education from kindergarten through higher education. In this examination, the Committee may:

- (1) Study the budgets, programs, and policies of the Department of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the Community Colleges System Office, the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, and the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina to determine ways in which the General Assembly may encourage the improvement of all education provided to North Carolinians and may aid in the development of more integrated methods of institutional accountability;
- (2) Examine, in particular, the Basic Education Plan and the School Improvement and Accountability Act of 1989, to determine whether changes need to be built into the plans, whether implementation schedules need to be restructured, and how to manage the ongoing development of the policies underlying these legislative plans, including

- a determination of whether there is a need for the legislature to develop ongoing funding patterns for these plans;
- (3) Study other states' educational initiatives in public schools, community colleges, and public universities, in order to provide an ongoing commentary to the General Assembly on these initiatives and to make recommendations for implementing similar initiatives in North Carolina; and
 - (4) Study any other educational matters that the Committee considers necessary to fulfill its mandate.
 - (5) Study the needs of children and youth. This study may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Developing strategies for addressing the issues of school dropout, teen suicide, and adolescent pregnancy.
 - b. Identifying and evaluating the impact on children and youth of other economic and environmental issues.

(b) The Committee may make interim reports to the General Assembly on matters for which it may report to a regular session of the General Assembly. A report to the General Assembly may contain any legislation needed to implement a recommendation of the Committee.

§ 120-70.82. Organization of Committee.

(a) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall each designate a cochair of the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. The Committee shall meet at least once a quarter and may meet at other times upon the joint call of the cochairs.

(b) A quorum of the Committee is 10 members. No action may be taken except by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present. While in the discharge of its official duties, the Committee has the powers of a joint committee under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4.

(c) Members of the Committee receive subsistence and travel expenses as provided in G.S. 120-3.1. The Committee may contract for consultants or hire employees in accordance with G.S. 120-32.02. The Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff to assist the Committee in its work. Upon the direction of the Legislative Services Commission, the Supervisors of Clerks of the Senate and of the House of Representatives shall assign clerical staff to the Committee. The expenses for clerical employees shall be borne by the Committee.

§ 120-70.83. Additional powers.

The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, while in discharge of official duties, shall have access to any paper or document, and may compel the attendance of any State official or employee before the Committee or secure any evidence under G.S. 120.19. In addition, G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4 shall apply to the proceedings of the Committee as if it were a joint committee of the General Assembly.

§§ 120-70.84 through 120-70.89. Reserved for future codification purposes.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

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DRAFT

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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BILL DRAFT 2019-TCz-27 [v.3]

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
10/13/2020 12:03:30 PM

Short Title: Student Digital Learning Access. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO MAINTAIN A DIGITAL LEARNING DASHBOARD UPDATED ANNUALLY BY PUBLIC SCHOOL UNITS, AND TO REQUIRE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE BASED ON INFORMATION ON STUDENT DIGITAL LEARNING ACCESS DURING COVID-19, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Part 3A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-102.9. Digital learning dashboard.

(a) The State Board of Education shall establish and maintain an electronic dashboard to publicly display information related to digital learning. The State Board shall include in the dashboard, at a minimum, the following categories of information to be reported:

(1) Digital devices available to students within the school, with information available by the following categories:

- a. Public school unit.
- b. School.
- c. Grade level.
- d. Devices provided by the public school unit.
- e. Devices provided by the student's home.
- f. Type of device.
- g. Personal devices provided for student use.

(2) Out-of-school internet connectivity for students, with information available by the following categories:

- a. Public school unit.
- b. School.
- c. Grade level.
- d. Type of connectivity.
- e. For homes with no connectivity, reason for lack of connection.
- f. For students without home connectivity, primary non-school source for internet connectivity.

(3) Digital devices available to students outside of the school, with information available by the following categories:

- a. Public school unit.
- b. School.
- c. Grade level.
- d. Devices provided by the public school unit.
- e. Devices provided by the student's home.
- f. Type of device.
- g. For homes with no devices, reason for lack of devices.

(b) Each public school unit shall annually update all categories of information included in the digital learning dashboard no later than November 15.

(c) The State Board of Education shall annually report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by February 15 on statewide trends reflected in the digital learning dashboard, successes and continued challenges in ensuring all students have digital learning access both in and out of school, and recommendations on ways to continue to close the digital learning accessibility gap."

SECTION 1.(b) G.S. 115C-75.9 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(o) Digital Learning Dashboard. – An innovative school shall annually update information to the digital learning dashboard, as required by G.S. 115C-102.9."

SECTION 1.(c) G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(i) A charter school shall annually update information to the digital learning dashboard, as required by G.S. 115C-102.9."

SECTION 1.(d) G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(17) Digital learning dashboard updates. – A regional school shall annually update information to the digital learning dashboard, as required by G.S. 115C-102.9."

SECTION 1.(e) G.S. 116-239.8(b) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(19) Digital learning dashboard updates. – A regional school shall annually update information to the digital learning dashboard, as required by G.S. 115C-102.9."

SECTION 1.(f) Section 6(d) of S.L. 2018-32 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(5a) G.S. 115C-102.9, Digital learning dashboard."

SECTION 1.(g) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

SECTION 2.(a) The Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Information Technology, in collaboration with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University (Friday Institute) (collectively referred to herein as the Departments) shall conduct a statewide assessment of data related to out-of-school internet and device access for North Carolina elementary and secondary students obtained during the physical school closure and at-home learning that occurred due to COVID-19 during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Public school units shall provide any relevant data from this period to the Departments upon request at the most granular level available. The assessment conducted by the Departments shall review the available data to identify the scope of students who lack out-of-school internet access or devices at home, the reasons students lack such access, including accessibility to adequate broadband in the homes, cost of broadband services, and lack of devices, and the methods used to address the lack of access during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Based on the assessed data, the Departments shall identify and make recommendations for effective programs and policies to close the student digital access gap, and shall recommend effective approaches to maintain current granular data on the student digital access gap.

SECTION 2.(b) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall coordinate (i) access to available data from each public school unit for the Departments and (ii) the reporting of the

1 recommendations of the Departments as provided in this section. The Superintendent of Public
2 Instruction shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the assessment
3 of the student digital access gap no later than October 15, 2021.

4 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.
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DRAFT

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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BILL DRAFT 2019-TCz-28 [v.3]

**(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
10/13/2020 10:29:26 AM**

Short Title: Report on K-12 Computer Science Data. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO REQUIRE ANNUAL REPORTING ON PARTICIPATION ON
COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSES AND COURSE OF STUDY, AS
RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(47) Computer Science Reporting. – The State Board of Education shall report annually by September 15 on the following data related to computer science participation. For each item, the report shall include (i) statewide data for the most recent year available, and the four years of data prior, when available, to establish trends in computer science instruction, and (ii) data for each local school administrative unit and charter school, when available:

- a. The number of teachers employed to teach computational thinking and computer science.
- b. The statewide and elective courses offered in computer science and computational thinking, and the number of students enrolled in each course statewide.
- c. The number of students enrolled in computer science and computational thinking courses by grade level.
- d. For subsections b. and c. of this subdivision, the report shall also include information on enrollment numbers by the following subgroups:
 - 1. Economically disadvantaged students.
 - 2. Students from major racial and ethnic groups.
 - 3. Students by gender.
 - 4. Children with disabilities.
 - 5. English learners."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.