



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

*Review and Adoption of Policies and
Procedures Regarding Keeping
Students in School Until Graduation
and Pursuing A Rigorous Academic
Course of Study*

*Session Law 2003-277, Section 3.
(Senate Bill 656)*

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Executive Summary

In response to the directives given in Session Law 2003-2777, Senate Bill 656, Section 3, a review of the State Board policies and procedures addressing (a) encouraging students to remain in school until high school graduation requirements are completed and (b) to pursue a rigorous academic course of study was completed.

The review revealed a comprehensive collection of policies addressing a rigorous academic course of study including performance and content standards, testing requirements and graduation requirements. Rigor is inherent across all curricular areas because the curriculum development process is based on national standards. Another facet of rigor is instructional delivery which is largely the responsibility of the principal. A new policy that actually defines academic rigor for LEAs will be developed. A subcommittee of the State Board of Education has been appointed to develop the new policy to present to the Board for adoption in the near future.

Policies addressing issues of encouraging students to remain in school until high school graduation requirements are met required some revision. These revisions were made and adopted by the State Board. They are presented in their final form. The final requirement of the law was to check on the progress of LEAs in addressing the designated policies. The majority of the LEAs either have policies and procedures or are pursuing developing such. Those who reported "no" have received a memo reminding them of the expectations of the law. They will be surveyed again in June 2004.

The policies and procedures submitted by LEAs are on file in the Office of Curriculum and School Reform Services. They are available for review upon request.

Introduction

The history of dropout data collection began in 1985 when the General Assembly established the state dropout prevention fund as part of the Basic Education Program. From that time until present, there has been a concerted effort to account for every student who leaves school prior to graduation.

North Carolina's Compulsory Attendance Law (G.S. 155C-378) requires every parent, guardian, or other person in North Carolina having charge or control of a child between the ages of 7 and 16 years of age to cause that child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned is in session. This means that all students between the ages of 7 and 16 who do not meet exemptions, like transferring to another school, must be counted as dropouts.

Though North Carolina has established a trend of a declining number of dropouts over the last several years, there is still a loss of too many students. To ensure the continuing decrease in dropouts, safeguards and support systems are put in place to support the academic success of these students.

These students and all others should be engaged in a rigorous academic course of study to prepare them for the 21st century challenges. Whether students enter the workplace, the military, or continue their education in a post-secondary setting, they must have a core of academic skills including math, science and communications skills.

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*State Board of Education has formed a subcommittee to devise a policy on academic rigor which will come before the full SBE for discussion and adoption at a future date.

Legislative Charge

Session Law 2003-277, Senate Bill 656

An Act to Establish the Innovative Education Initiatives Act

Section 3. Local administrative units and the State Board of Education shall identify, strengthen and adopt policies and procedures that encourage students to remain in high school rather than drop out and that encourage all students to pursue a rigorous academic course of study. As part of this process, the State Board of Education and local school administrative units are encouraged to eliminate or revise any policies or procedures that discourage any student from pursuing a rigorous academic course of study. No later than March 1, 2004, local school administrative units shall report to the State Board of Education the policies they have identified, strengthened, adopted, and eliminated under this section. No later than April 15, 2004, the State Board shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on these policies as well as on the policies the Board has identified, strengthened, adopted, and eliminated under this section.

Section I. State Board Policies and Procedures Review

A. Policies and Procedures addressing a Rigorous Academic Course of Study

The State Board of Education has adopted and implemented numerous policies addressing a rigorous academic course of study. These policies are listed below and fall into several categories:

- Testing Requirements
- Performance Standards for Grades K-12
- K-2 Assessment
- Achievement Level Ranges for the North Carolina Comprehensive Test, End-of-Grade Tests and Writing Assessments at Grades 4, 7 and 10
- Delineation of the *Standard Course of Study* for the Curricula Areas/Career Technical Education
- The Revised Basic Education Plan
- Student Accountability Standards
- Articulation Agreement between Secondary Schools and the Community College System
- Driver Education

The policies are comprehensive, and rigor is inherent in all curricular areas. Omitted from the list is a policy describing for our public schools what academic rigor is. A subcommittee of the State Board has been established to develop such a policy for the Board's consideration. Current policies do not require revision at this time. A listing of the State Board of Education policies promoting a rigorous academic course of study is provided below.

HSP-A-000	Policy governing testing requirements and opportunities
HSP-A-007	Policy delineating the guidelines for the testing of students with limited English proficiency
HSP-A-008	Policy endorsing that all students taking advanced placement courses also take the corresponding AP exam
HSP-A-012	Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives for NCLB Title III
HSP-C-005	Policy delineating the annual performance standards for Grades K-12 under the ABCs Model
HSP-C-015	Policy delineating achievement level ranges for the North Carolina High School Comprehensive Test under the ABCs Accountability Program
HSP-C-016	Policy regarding required K-2 assessments
HSP-C-018	Policy delineating achievement level ranges for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests in Reading and Mathematics and the North Carolina Writing Assessments at Grades 4, 7, and 10
HSP-F-001	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Arts Education

HSP-F-002	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for, Mathematics, Grades K-12
HSP-F-003	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Social Studies, Grades K-12
HSP-F-004	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts, Grades K-12
HSP-F-005	Policy revising the NC Workforce Development Education Program of Study and Support Services Guide
HSP-F-006	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Computer and Technology Skills, Grades K-12
HSP-F-007	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Healthful Living, Grades K-12
HSP-F-0008	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Science Curriculum, Grades K-12
HSP-F-009	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Second Languages
HSP-F-010	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Information Skills, Grades K-12
HSP-F-011	Policy delineating the NC Standard Course of Study for Comprehensive School Counseling
HSP-G-000	Policy regarding the revised Basic Education Plan
HSP-G-004	Policy eliminating General Mathematics and Consumer Math courses and to substitute a course in pre-algebra
HSP-I-001	Policy approving statewide performance standards and measures for vocational education programs
HSP-I-003	Policy for Academic Credit for Work-based Learning
HSP-L-000	Policy requiring students to demonstrate computer proficiencies as a prerequisite for high school graduation
HSP-L-001	Policy giving the local school boards of education the authority to exceed minimum graduation requirements
HSP-L-003	Policy adopting the NC Academic Scholars Program
HSP-L-004	Policy outlining standards to be incorporated into the electronically generated high school transcript
HSP-N-000	Policy on minimum competency requirements for graduation from high school
HSP-N-003	16 NCAC 6D .0502 Student Accountability Standards
HSP-N-004	16 NCAC 6D .0503 State graduation requirements

HSP-N-008	16 NCAC 6D .0507 Accountability Standards for Students With Limited English Proficiency
HSP-O-000	Policy regarding joint policy statement regarding Tech Prep Programs
HSP-O-001	Policy on North Carolina High School-to-Community College Articulation Agreement
HSP-R-002	Policy regarding driver education policy as it relates to the instructional day and the SCS

- B. Policies and Procedures addressing encouraging students to remain in school were reviewed. It was found that new policies were not needed, but the existing policies required some revision. The two policies, HSP-Q-000 (policy establishing procedures for the referral of dropouts) and HSP-Q-001 (policy regarding dropout prevention and students at risk) are presented with the recommended changes.

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Manual**

Policy Identification

Priority: High Student Achievement

Category: Dropouts

Policy ID Number: HSP-Q-000

Policy Title: Policy establishing procedures for the referral of dropouts

Current Policy Date: 04/01/2004

Other Historical Information: Previous board date: 10/02/1987

Statutory Reference: GS 115C-47(32)

Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Reference Number and Category:

***** Begin Policy *** (Do not tamper with this line)**

Policy Establishing the Exit Conference and Referral Process for Students Classified as "Dropouts"

1. When school building-level officials determine that a student plans to drop out of school, the principal or his/her designee will conduct an exit conference with the student and parent/guardian. At a minimum, the individual(s) conducting the conference should:
 - a. discuss the reason(s) for the student's decision to drop out;
 - b. provide information to the student on the seriousness of dropping out of school; i.e., lower lifetime expected earnings, unfulfilled employment potential, etc;
 - c. provide information on other educational alternatives, which includes their positive attributes and shortcomings; and
 - d. discuss how dropping out impacts graduation requirements.
2. If, after repeated intervention efforts by school system personnel, a student chooses to drop out of school, he/she is to be referred to an appropriate alternative for further educational services.
 - a. "Appropriate" shall be defined as that program or service which best meets the needs of an individual student according to his/her age, present grade level, academic ability, and interests.
 - b. Referral of a student to appropriate services shall occur at the time he/she drops out of the high school program in which he/she is currently enrolled.

3. Each student who drops out of the regular high school program shall be referred to an extended school day program, alternative school, or optional school if such a program exists in the area and if it provides appropriate services for the individual.
4. Referral for appropriate educational services to any educational program shall be made on a form to be designed by the LEA and to include the name of the student, date of birth, age, address, telephone number, current grade level, date of withdrawal, course credits from transcript and recent test data (achievement and competency test data where appropriate and if applicable). The form shall be signed by the student dropping out, his or her parent/guardian, the principal and the superintendent. A copy of the referral form shall be kept in the student's cumulative folder for documentation of referral.
5. Beginning with the 1987-88 school year, there will be no required waiting period between the time a student drops out of school and the time he/she may enroll in an appropriate alternative program, including the community college system.
However, no student entering an alternative educational program will be allowed to graduate prior to his/her normal date of graduation.
6. At the time a student drops out of the public school, he/she shall be coded W2. Upon his/her entry into another public school, the withdrawal code shall be changed to W1. W2's will then be reduced on the next principal's monthly report. If a student enrolls in an alternative program within the same school month of dropping out, he/she may be coded W1, thus eliminating the need to change withdrawal codes. Students withdrawing from high school prior to graduation to attend community college programs (e.g., Adult Basic Education, GED, Adult High School) shall be coded W2.
7. If at the end of six weeks, the public school has not received verification of the student's enrollment from the program to which he/she was referred, it is suggested that personnel from the public school make contact with that educational program to determine the student's status. It is recommended that school systems develop a systematic process for follow-up activities regarding dropouts.
8. This referral process applies only to students aged 16 or older. Some school systems do have alternative programs for students in the middle grades and junior high school. In that case, a student moving into such a program will be coded as a transfer. North Carolina law prohibits schools from dropping students from enrollment prior to age 16.
9. A student may be referred to an appropriate educational program with or without his/her consent.

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Manual**

Policy Identification

Priority: High Student Achievement

Category: Dropouts

Policy ID Number: HSP-Q-001

Policy Title: Policy regarding dropout prevention and students at risk

Current Policy Date: 04/01/2004

Other Historical Information: Previous board dates: 06/06/1990, 08/07/1996, 08/06/1998, 01/13/1999

Statutory Reference: SB 43 (1989)

Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Reference Number and Category:

***** Begin Policy *** (Do not tamper with this line)**

The 1985 General Assembly established the state dropout prevention fund as a part of the Basic Education Program. The intent of the General Assembly is to increase the number and range of services to at-risk students. It is the policy of the State Board of Education that dropout prevention and students at risk services be a part of the educational program of every local education agency (LEA). The Board has established the goal of reducing the dropout rate in North Carolina. To facilitate the accomplishment of this goal, the State Board of Education has adopted a performance indicator in guidelines for implementation of the School Improvement and Accountability Act and a standard in state accreditation which requires all local education agencies to set a goal for the reduction of their dropout rates.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Dropout - Any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school.
- B. Student at risk - A student at risk is a young person who because of a wide range of individual, personal, financial, familial, social, behavioral or academic circumstances may experience school failure or other unwanted outcomes unless interventions occur to reduce the risk factors. Circumstances which often place students at risk may include, but are not limited to: not meeting state/local proficiency standards, grade retention; unidentified or inadequately addressed learning needs, alienation from school life; unchallenging curricula and/or instruction, tardiness and or poor school attendance; negative peer influence; unmanageable behavior; substance abuse and other health risk behaviors, abuse and neglect; inadequate parental/family and/or school support; and limited English proficiency.

- C. **Alternative Learning Programs** – Alternative Learning Programs are defined as services for students at risk of truancy, academic failure, behavior problems, and/or dropping out of school. These services should be designed to better meet the needs of students who have not been successful in the regular public school setting. Alternative learning programs serve students at any level who

- are suspended and/or expelled,
- are at risk of participation in juvenile crime,
- have dropped out and desire to return to school,
- have a history of truancy,
- are returning from juvenile justice settings or psychiatric hospitals, or
- have learning styles that are better served in an alternative setting.

Alternative learning programs provide individualized programs outside of a standard classroom setting in a caring atmosphere in which students learn the skills necessary to redirect their lives.

An alternative learning program must

- provide the primary instruction for selected at-risk students
- enroll students for a designated period of time, usually a minimum of one academic grading period,
- offer course credit or grade-level promotion credit in core academic areas and
- provide transition support to and from/between the school of origin and alternative learning program.

Alternative learning programs may also

- address behavioral or emotional problems that interfere with adjustment to or benefiting from the regular education classroom,
- provide smaller classes and/or student/teacher ratios,
- provide instruction beyond regular school hours,
- provide flexible scheduling, and/or
- assist students in meeting graduation requirements other than course credits.

Alternative learning programs for at-risk students typically serve students in an alternative school or alternative program within the regular school.

- D. **Alternative School** - An Alternative School is one option for an alternative learning program. It serves at-risk students and has an organizational designation based on the DPI assignment of an official school code. An alternative school is different from a regular public school and provides choices of routes to completion of school. For the majority of students, the goal is to return to the regular public school. Alternative schools may vary from other schools in such areas as teaching methods, hours, curriculum, or sites, and they are intended to meet particular learning needs.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

- A. Funds may be used to support programs and services to at-risk students in all grades, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.
- B. Each school system and school shall develop and maintain an identifiable and targeted dropout prevention and students at risk program to meet the needs of students at risk of school failure. The program should be goal oriented and should include specific strategies to improve student achievement and keep students in school.
- C. Plans shall be maintained at the LEA and be available for review by Department of Public Instruction staff. Individual schools with dropout rates above the annual state average and/or those that have not steadily reduced their dropout rates annually shall develop a dropout prevention plan based on best practices and shall incorporate these strategies into their School Improvement Plan.
- D. LEAs are encouraged to develop a personal education plan for each identified student at risk.
- E. Funds may be used to employ full-time or part-time personnel.
- F. Funds may be used to compensate substitute teachers.
- G. All personnel must hold State Board of Education certification appropriate for the teaching or student services position held. Personnel in in-school suspension programs may in some instances be non-certified, as determined by program needs on a case by case basis. However, in instances where these personnel are not certified, they should minimally have the same training as required for teacher assistants. In-school suspension programs should include both an instructional focus and behavior modification strategies.
- H. Funds may be used for administrative costs to support the salary, travel, and supplies of a full- or part-time coordinator (supervisor or director).
- I. Funds may be used for instructional materials, supplies, travel, and equipment for dropout prevention and students at risk staff and programs.
- J. All work of staff employed through dropout prevention funds must directly benefit students at risk of dropping out. Dropout prevention and students at risk staff may, however, share proportionately in routine duties carried out by all staff of a school.
- K. State dropout prevention and students at risk funds may not supplant dropout prevention programs funded from other state and federal sources (except Job Training Partnership Act funds).
- L. All Average Daily Membership positions that are generated by dropout prevention programs, such as extended school day and alternative schools, should remain within those programs to provide additional services to at-risk youths.

- M. Funds may be used for dropout prevention programs throughout the twelve months of the fiscal year but may not be carried forward to the next fiscal year.
- N. Each LEA shall submit data requested by the Department of Public Instruction.

III. PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Each LEA is expected to implement the following guidelines for dropout prevention. The program's impact can be evaluated by the indicators listed.

- A. Reduce the dropout rate of the school system.

Indicator:

- 1. A decrease in the number of dropouts as set forth in the LEA's accountability plan.

- B. Provide an alternative to out-of-school suspension by creating a learning and therapeutic environment within the school for students with problems which would normally lead to out-of-school suspension.

Indicator:

- 1. A reduction in the number of out-of-school suspensions from the previous school year.
- 2. A reduction in the number of in-school suspensions from the previous school year.

- C. Develop and adopt by the local board of education a system-wide discipline policy incorporating a continuum of approaches to be used in addressing behavior problems.

Indicator:

- 1. A reduction in the number of incidents and referrals to the principal's office for behavior problems from the previous school year.
- 2. Completed copy of the adopted discipline policy.

- D. Implement a system, using teachers, counselors, or other appropriate personnel, for early identification of at-risk students, grades K-12, with an emphasis on the early grades, K-3.

Indicator:

- 1. Development and adoption of a system for the identification of at-risk students, kindergarten through grade twelve.
- 2. Development and maintenance of a profile of each at-risk student. The profile should include grades, truancy (attendance record), number of retentions, and discipline problems.

- E. Develop and enhance programs and services to identify, assess, and resolve difficulties which may interfere with a student's attendance.

Indicator:

1. A reduction in unlawful absences from the previous school year.

- F. Establish linkages with community agencies for program support and coordination.

Indicator:

1. Development and adoption of written cooperative agreements with at least two community agencies serving at-risk students.
2. Collection of data on the number of referrals of individual students to community agencies (results to be submitted to state agency).

IV. PROGRAM OPTIONS

A wide range of programs for dropout prevention and students at risk is needed within every school system and community to complement the quality educational programs available to all students. Listed below are the types of programs which may be funded through state dropout prevention and students at risk funds. Within these general options, the specific programs to be implemented will be determined by each local school system based on an assessment of needs and local priorities. Local programs may include components of one or more of these options, but every school system is encouraged to develop programs which can most effectively meet local needs.

- A. **Early Identification and Intervention Programs:**
Early identification and intervention programs seek to recognize students who may face problems and prevent or ameliorate those problems before they become severe.
- B. **Counseling for At-Risk Students:**
Counseling for at-risk students focuses the skills of counselors on preventing and alleviating the problems facing students which can lead to dropping out. Counselors identify at-risk students and follow up to assure that needed services are provided.
- C. **Behavior Improvement Programs:**
Behavior improvement programs seek to improve discipline in the schools through a variety of approaches, with the ultimate goal of greater self-discipline. The emphasis is on increasing the ability of teachers to handle discipline within their own classrooms. In-school suspension programs are one alternative for students whose behavior is extremely disruptive and could result in suspension or expulsion. The programs focus on reduction of disruptive behavior and provide classroom instruction as well as counseling in a therapeutic setting.
- D. **Academic Enhancement Programs:**
Academic enhancement programs are designed to accelerate the learning of students who are falling behind their peers in academic achievement. Through remediation, accelerated learning, continuous progress learning, and other enhancements, the goal is to increase achievement while keeping these at-risk students a part of the overall educational program in the schools.

- E. **Work-Related Programs:**
Work-related programs identify potential dropouts and offer counseling, remediation, career guidance, and job preparation services designed to meet their individual needs. These services are intended to assist at-risk students in moving from school to the work environment and to provide them with skills necessary to compete in today's society.
- F. **Services for At-Risk Students:**
Services for at-risk students are designed to meet particular local needs and priorities. The basic requirement of each service is that its primary goal is to encourage achievement and keep students in school. Among the types of services that may be funded are attendance improvement programs and other programs that serve groups of at-risk students, such as the handicapped, juvenile and youthful offenders, substance abusers, pregnant students, or adolescent parents, such as school social work, school psychology services, or school nursing, to at-risk students. Services such as after-school care and enrichment, public/private partnerships, mentoring, support clubs, summer activities, peer helpers, outdoor experiences, student advocacy, and parental involvement are encouraged (to the extent that they may be funded under other guidelines set forth herein).

V. APPLICATION TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

A charter school may apply to the State Board of Education for designation as an alternative school if it designates in the charter that the school will serve as an alternative school as defined in Section I-C of this policy.

Charter Schools designated as alternative schools are subject to application procedures and on-site monitoring by the Charter Schools office and/or the Division of Accountability Services as specified by the State Board of Education.

In all respects, programs will be consistent with Chapter 147, Article 3C of the General Statutes (Senate Bill 1260).

Section 2.

A new policy describing academic rigor for LEAs will be developed by a subcommittee of the State Board of Education. It will come before the entire Board for discussion and adoption in the near future.

Section 3 – Results of Local Administrative Units Policy and Procedures Review

This chart contains feedback received from the LEAs in response to the survey. LEAs giving a “no” response have received a memo explaining the expectations of the law along with a copy of the law. They will be surveyed again in June and the results reported the SBE. Policies and procedures submitted are on file in the Office of Curriculum and School Reform Services and may be viewed upon request.

		<i>Policies/Procedures that encourage students to stay in school</i>	<i>Policies/Procedures encouraging students to pursue a rigorous academic course of study</i>
1.	Alamance-Burlington	No	No
2.	Alexander	No	In Student Accountability Plan/Closing Gap plan
3.	Anson	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
4.	Ashe	Yes	Yes
5.	Asheboro City	Yes	Yes
6.	Asheville City	No, addressed through programs/strategies	Yes
7.	Avery	No specific policy	Yes
8.	Beaufort	Yes	Yes
9.	Bertie	Yes	Yes
10.	Bladen	No	No, but planning to draft policies
11.	Brunswick	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
12.	Buncombe	Yes	Yes
13.	Burke	Yes	Yes
14.	Cabarrus	Yes	Yes
15.	Caldwell	Yes	Yes
16.	Camden	No	No
17.	Carteret	Yes	Yes
18.	Caswell	No, but policy manual being revised	No, but policy manual being revised
19.	Catawba	Yes	Yes
20.	Chapel Hill-Carrboro	Yes	Yes
21.	Chatham	Yes	Yes
22.	Cherokee	Yes	Yes
23.	Chowan	Yes	Yes
24.	Clay	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
25.	Cleveland	Yes	No, but planning to draft policies
26.	Clinton City	Yes	Yes
27.	Craven	No	No, but planning to draft policies
28.	Cumberland	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
29.	Currituck	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
30.	Dare	Yes	Yes
31.	Davidson	No, provide programs to discourage	No, offer challenging curriculum
32.	Davie	No	Yes
33.	Duplin	No, but planning to draft policies	No, in discussion process
34.	Durham	Yes	Yes
35.	Edgecombe	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
36.	Elkin City	Yes	Yes
37.	Franklin	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
38.	Gaston	Yes	Yes
39.	Gates	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
40.	Graham	Yes	Yes
41.	Granville	Yes	Yes
42.	Greene	No	No
43.	Guilford	No	No
44.	Halifax	Yes	Yes
45.	Harnett	Yes	No (In Strategic Plan)
46.	Haywood	No	Yes
47.	Henderson	No (addressed in their strategic plan)	No (addressed in their strategic plan)
48.	Hertford	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but encourage rigorous academic studies
49.	Hickory City	Yes	Yes
50.	Hoke	Yes	No, but planning to draft policies
51.	Hyde	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
52.	Iredell-Statesville	Yes	Yes

53.	Jackson	Yes	Yes
54.	Johnston	No	Yes
55.	Jones	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
56.	Kannapolis City	No	No
57.	Kings Mountain	Yes	Yes
58.	Lee	Yes	Yes
59.	Lenoir	Yes	Yes
60.	Lexington City	No	No
61.	Lincoln	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
62.	Macon	Yes	Yes
63.	Martin	No	No
64.	McDowell	Yes	Yes
65.	Mecklenburg	No, but considering draft policies	Yes
66.	Mitchell	No	No, but planning to draft policies
67.	Moore	No (addressed in their strategic plan)	No (addressed in their strategic plan)
68.	Mooresville Graded	No (accountability/graduation policies)	No (done via counseling)
69.	Mt. Airy	No (procedures/guidelines)	No, but encourage rigorous academic studies
70.	Nash-Rocky Mount	Yes	Yes
71.	New Hanover	Yes	Yes
72.	Newton-Conover	No	No
73.	Northampton	Yes	Yes
74.	Onslow	No	Yes
75.	Orange	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
76.	Pamlico	No (programs in place)	No (programs in place)
77.	Pasquotank	Yes	Yes
78.	Pender	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
79.	Perquimans	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
80.	Person	No, encourage to students to remain in school	Yes
81.	Pitt	Yes	Yes
82.	Polk	Yes	Yes
83.	Randolph	Yes	No, but planning to draft policies
84.	Richmond	No, but planning to draft policies	Yes
85.	Roanoke Rapids	No	Yes
86.	Robeson		
87.	Rockingham	No, encourage to students to remain in school	No (programs in place)
88.	Rowan	Yes	Yes
89.	Rutherford	Yes	Yes
90.	Sampson	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
91.	Scotland	No, but revising policy manual	Yes
92.	Shelby	No, but planning to draft policies	Yes
93.	Stanly	Yes	Yes
94.	Stokes	Yes	Yes
95.	Surry	Yes	Yes
96.	Swain	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
97.	Thomasville City	Yes	Yes
98.	Transylvania	No, procedures in place	No, procedures in place
99.	Tyrrell	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
100.	Union	Yes	Yes
101.	Vance	Yes	Yes
102.	Wake	Yes	Yes
103.	Warren	Yes	Yes
104.	Washington	No, but planning to draft policies	Yes
105.	Watauga	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
106.	Wayne	Yes	Yes
107.	Weldon City	No	No
108.	Whiteville City	Yes	Yes
109.	Wilkes	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies
110.	Wilson	No, but planning to draft policies	Yes
111.	Yadkin	No (graduation/accountability policies)	Yes
112.	Yancey	No, but planning to draft policies	No, but planning to draft policies

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

SESSION LAW 2003-277
SENATE BILL 656

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE INNOVATIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVES ACT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 116C of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new section to read:

"§ 116C-4. First in America Innovative Education Initiatives Act.

(a) The General Assembly strongly endorses the Governor's goal of making North Carolina's system of education first in America by 2010. With that as the goal, the Education Cabinet shall set as a priority cooperative efforts between secondary schools and institutions of higher education so as to reduce the high school dropout rate, increase high school and college graduation rates, decrease the need for remediation in institutions of higher education, and raise certificate, associate, and bachelor degree completion rates. The Cabinet shall identify and support efforts that achieve the following purposes:

- (1) Support cooperative innovative high school programs developed under Part 9 of Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes.
- (2) Improve high school completion rates and reduce high school dropout rates.
- (3) Close the achievement gap.
- (4) Create redesigned middle schools or high schools.
- (5) Provide flexible, customized programs of learning for high school students who would benefit from accelerated, higher level coursework or early graduation.
- (6) Establish high quality alternative learning programs.
- (7) Establish a virtual high school.
- (8) Implement other innovative education initiatives designed to advance the State's system of education.

(b) The Education Cabinet shall identify federal, State, and local funds that may be used to support these initiatives. In addition, the Cabinet is strongly encouraged to pursue private funds that could be used to support these initiatives.

(c) The Cabinet shall report by January 15, 2004,

and annually thereafter, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on its activities under this section. The annual reports may include recommendations for statutory changes needed to support cooperative innovative initiatives, including programs approved under Part 9 of Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes."

SECTION 2. Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new Part to read:

"Part 9. Cooperative Innovative High School Programs.

"§ 115C-238.50. Purpose.

(a) The purpose of this Part is to authorize boards of trustees of community colleges and local boards of education to jointly establish cooperative innovative programs in high schools and community colleges that will expand students' opportunities for educational success through high quality instructional programming. These cooperative innovative high school programs shall target:

- (1) High school students who are at risk of dropping out of school before attaining a high school diploma; or
- (2) High school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction.

(b) All the cooperative innovative high school programs established under this Part shall:

- (1) Prepare students adequately for future learning in the workforce or in an institution of higher education.
- (2) Expand students' educational opportunities within the public school system.
- (3) Be centered on the core academic standards represented by the college preparatory or tech prep program of study as defined by the State Board of Education.
- (4) Encourage the cooperative or shared use of resources, personnel, and facilities between public schools and community colleges.
- (5) Integrate and emphasize both academic and technical skills necessary for students to be successful in a more demanding and changing workplace.
- (6) Emphasize parental involvement and provide consistent counseling, advising, and parent conferencing so that parents and students can make responsible decisions regarding course taking and can track the students' academic progress and success.
- (7) Be held accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.
- (8) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- (9) Establish joint institutional responsibility and accountability for support of students and their success.
- (10) Effectively utilize existing funding sources for high school, community college, and vocational programs and actively pursue new funding

from other sources.

(11) Develop methods for early identification of potential participating students in the middle grades and through high school.

(12) Reduce the percentage of students needing remedial courses upon their initial entry from high school into a college or university.

(c) Programs developed under this Part that target students who are at risk of dropping out of high school before attaining a high school diploma shall:

(1) Provide these students with the opportunity to graduate from high school possessing the core academic skills needed for postsecondary education and high-skilled employment.

(2) Enable students to complete a technical or academic program in a field that is in high demand and has high wages.

(3) Set and achieve goals that significantly reduce dropout rates and raise high school and community college retention, certification, and degree completion rates.

(4) Enable students who complete these programs to pass employer exams, if applicable.

(d) Cooperative innovative high school programs that offer accelerated learning programs shall:

(1) Provide a flexible, customized program of instruction for students who would benefit from accelerated, higher level coursework or early graduation from high school.

(2) Enable students to obtain a high school diploma in less than four years and begin or complete an associate degree program or to master a certificate or vocational program.

(3) Offer a college preparatory academic core and in-depth studies in a career or technical field that will lead to advanced programs or employment opportunities in engineering, health sciences, or teaching.

(e) Cooperative innovative high school programs may include the creation of a school within a school, a technical high school, or a high school or technical center located on the campus of a community college.

(f) Students are eligible to attend these programs as early as ninth grade.

"§ 115C-238.51. Application process.

(a) A local board of education and a local board of trustees of a community college shall jointly apply to establish a cooperative innovative high school program under this Part.

(b) The application shall contain at least the following information:

(1) A description of a program that implements the purposes in G.S. 115C-238.50.

(2) A statement of how the program relates to the Economic Vision Plan adopted for the economic development region in which the program is to be located.

- (3) The facilities to be used by the program and the manner in which administrative services of the program are to be provided.
- (4) A description of student academic and vocational achievement goals and the method of demonstrating that students have attained the skills and knowledge specified for those goals.
- (5) A description of how the program will be operated, including budgeting, curriculum, transportation, and operating procedures.
- (6) The process to be followed by the program to ensure parental involvement.
- (7) The process by which students will be selected for and admitted to the program.
- (8) A description of the funds that will be used and a proposed budget for the program. This description shall identify how the average daily membership (ADM) and full-time equivalent (FTE) students are counted.
- (9) The qualifications required for individuals employed in the program.
- (10) The number of students to be served.
- (11) A description of how the program's effectiveness in meeting the purposes in G.S. 115C-238.50 will be measured.

(c) The application shall be submitted to the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges by November 1 of each year. The State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges shall appoint a joint advisory committee to review the applications and to recommend to the State Boards those programs that meet the requirements of this Part and that achieve the purposes set out in G.S. 115C-238.50.

(d) The State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges shall approve two cooperative innovative high school programs in each of the State's economic development regions. The State Boards may approve programs recommended by the joint advisory committee or may approve other programs that were not recommended. The State Boards shall approve all applications by March 15 of each year. No application shall be approved unless the State Boards find that the application meets the requirements set out in this Part and that granting the application would achieve the purposes set out in G.S. 115C-238.50. Priority shall be given to applications that are most likely to further State education policies, to address the economic development needs of the economic development regions in which they are located, and to strengthen the educational programs offered in the local school administrative units in which they are located.

"§ 115C-238.52. Participation by other education partners.

(a) Any or all of the following education partners may participate in the development of a cooperative innovative program under this Part that is targeted to high school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction:

- (1) A constituent institution of The University of North Carolina.
 - (2) A private college or university located in North Carolina.
 - (3) A private business or organization.
 - (4) The county board of commissioners in the county in which the program is located.
- (b) Any or all of the education partners listed in subsection (a) of this section that participate shall:
- (1) Jointly apply with the local board of education and the local board of trustees of the community college to establish a cooperative innovative program under this Part.
 - (2) Be identified in the application.
 - (3) Sign the written agreement under G.S. 115C-238.53 (b).

"§ 115C-238.53. Program operation.

- (a) A program approved by the State shall be accountable to the local board of education.
- (b) A program approved under this Part shall operate under the terms of a written agreement signed by the local board of education, local board of trustees of the community college, State Board of Education, and State Board of Community Colleges. The agreement shall incorporate the information provided in the application, as modified during the approval process, and any terms and conditions imposed on the program by the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges. The agreement may be for a term of no longer than five school years.
- (c) A program may be operated in a facility owned or leased by the local board of education, the local board of trustees of the community college, or the education partner, if any.
- (d) A program approved under this Part shall provide instruction each school year for at least 180 days during nine calendar months, shall comply with laws and policies relating to the education of students with disabilities, and shall comply with Article 27 of this Chapter.
- (e) A program approved under this Part may use State, federal, and local funds allocated to the local school administrative unit, to the State Board of Community Colleges, and to the community college to implement the program. If there is an education partner and if it is a public body, the program may use State, federal, and local funds allocated to that body.
- (f) Except as provided in this Part and pursuant to the terms of the agreement, a program is exempt from laws and rules applicable to a local board of education, a local school administrative unit, a community college, or a local board of trustees of a community college.

"§ 115C-238.54. Funds for programs.

- (a) The Department of Public Instruction shall assign a school code for each program that is approved under this Part. All positions and other State and federal allotments that are generated for this program shall be assigned to that school code. Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-105.25, once

funds are assigned to that school code, the local board of education may use these funds for the program and may transfer these funds between funding allotment categories.

(b) The local board of trustees of a community college may allocate State and federal funds for a program that is approved under this Part.

(c) An education partner under G.S. 115C-238.52 that is a public body may allocate State, federal, and local funds for a program that is approved under this Part.

(d) If not an education partner under G.S. 115C-238.52, a county board of commissioners in a county where a program is located may nevertheless appropriate funds to a program approved under this Part.

(e) The local board of education and the local board of trustees of the community college are strongly encouraged to seek funds from sources other than State, federal, and local appropriations. They are strongly encouraged to seek funds the Education Cabinet identifies or obtains under G.S. 116C-4.

"§ 115C-238.55. Evaluation of programs.

The State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges shall evaluate the success of students in programs approved under this Part. Success shall be measured by high school retention rates, high school completion rates, high school dropout rates, certification and associate degree completion, admission to four-year institutions, postgraduation employment in career or study-related fields, and employer satisfaction of employees who participated in and graduated from the programs. Beginning October 15, 2005, and annually thereafter, the Boards shall jointly report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the evaluation of these programs. If, by October 15, 2006, the Boards determine any or all of these programs have been successful, they shall jointly develop a prototype plan for similar programs that could be expanded across the State. This plan shall be included in their report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee that is due by October 15, 2007.

"§§ 115C-238.56 through 115C-238.59: Reserved for future codification purposes."

SECTION 3. Local school administrative units and the State Board of Education shall identify, strengthen, and adopt policies and procedures that encourage students to remain in high school rather than to drop out and that encourage all students to pursue a rigorous academic course of study. As part of this process, the State Board and the local school administrative units are encouraged to eliminate or revise any policies or procedures that discourage some students from completing high school or that discourage any student from pursuing a rigorous academic course of study. No later than March 1, 2004, local school administrative units shall report to the State Board of Education the policies they have identified, strengthened, adopted, and eliminated under this section. No later than April 15, 2004, the State Board shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on these policies as well as on the policies the Board has identified, strengthened, adopted, and eliminated under this section.

SECTION 4. Nothing in this act shall be

construed to obligate the General Assembly to make appropriations to implement this act.

SECTION 5. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 18th day of June, 2003.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ Richard T. Morgan
Speaker of the House of
Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 12:30 p.m. this 27th day of June, 2003

