



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Fifth Grade Career Awareness Program
§115C-157

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DPI Chronological Schedule, 2023–2024

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OVERVIEW

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

The report was prepared in accordance with requirements of G.S. 115C-157.

§ 115C-157. Responsibility of local boards of education:

- a) Each local school administrative unit shall provide free appropriate career and technical education instruction, activities, and services in accordance with the provisions of this Part for all youth, with priority given to youth in grades eight through 12, who elect the instruction and shall have responsibility for administering the instruction, activities, and services in accordance with federal and State law and State Board of Education policies.
- b) Each local school administrative unit shall offer as part of its career and technical education program at least two work-based learning opportunities that are related to career and technical education instruction. A work-based learning opportunity shall consist of on-the-job training through an internship, cooperative education, or an apprenticeship program meeting the requirements of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes.
- c) Each local board of education is encouraged to implement a career awareness program for students in grade five to educate students on the career and technical education programs offered in the local school administrative unit. A local board of education that adopts a career awareness program for fifth grade students shall report on program activities and student outcomes from the prior school year to the State Board of Education by October 1 of each year. By November 15 of each year, the State Board shall submit a consolidated report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on program outcomes and any legislative recommendations based on local board of education reports. (1977, c. 490, s. 2; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1993, c. 180, s. 3; 2004-124, s. 7.15(c); 2017-57, s. 7.23H(e).)

PART I: ACTIVITIES

The CTE Division developed and released a survey tool to all districts to collect data on activities completed during the 2022-23 school year. The survey asked, "How did your district participate in the following fifth Grade Career Awareness Activities", and included the following items:

1. Middle School Tours
2. High School Tours
3. Career Related Field Trips / Business Tours
4. Job Shadowing Opportunities
5. Guest Speakers
6. Career Fairs
7. Career Interest Inventories
8. Other Career Awareness Activities / Events

Survey Response: Though participation in the program is not required, we were pleased this year, the seventh year of the program, to have achieved a 100% response rate with 116 districts providing feedback. This is the third consecutive year with a 100% response rate. These numbers represent a large contrast to the 46% response rate during the first year of reporting (2017-2018).

PART II: STUDENT OUTCOMES

NCDPI CTE is pleased that the results of the Fifth Grade Career Awareness survey indicated approximately 200,174 fifth grade students were exposed to career awareness related to the CTE programs offered districts during the 2023-24 school year. This number does include some duplicative data between different career awareness event types. This is a slight decrease from 213,756 reported from 2022-23, but larger than the number for 2021-22 (163,075) and 2020-21 (79,320). However, when individual numbers are compared for the number of fifth grade students and districts participating for the 2023-24 school year with those of the previous year, the majority of the fields show an increase.

The reported data from all districts reflect the following information for the 2023-24 school year, with the 2022-23 school year included in Table 1 for reference:

Table 1: Participating Public School Units for 2023–2024

Event Type	Number of Participants 2022-23	Number of Participants 2023-24	Number of Districts 2022-23	Number of Districts 2023-24
Middle School Tours	53,244	47,632	89	98
High School Tours	5,291	9,567	26	32
Career-Related Field Trips / Business Tours	16,119	24,800	49	68
Job Shadowing Opportunities	1,849	918	14	12
Guest Speakers	64,770	40,313	83	87
Career Fairs	31,836	24,911	61	64
Career Interest Inventories	26,838	36,002	69	64
Other Activities / Events	12,809	16,031	48	52

The Office of Career and Technical Education is increasing efforts to generate tools and resources for fifth grade educators in North Carolina as well as engaging School Counselors, CTE Directors, Career Development Coordinators, and other NC educators in working with fifth grade students. Some efforts by the NCDPI CTE staff are as follows: conducting sessions at the annual CTE Summer Conference sharing best practices and data collected on Career Awareness Programs; generating publications to serve all NC educators as resources for increasing fifth grade career awareness education; encouraging districts to share their Career Awareness Programs and/or resources used at the local level with other districts by way of online resources hosted by the NCDPI CTE staff and in local public school unit gatherings and clusters; hosting webinars, panels, and “Collaboration Stations” for local CTE staff, such as Career Development Coordinators and CTE Directors; increasing visibility of 5th grade career awareness education initiatives by including school counselors in CTE work across the board when possible; and generating professional development opportunities for any North Carolina educators interested in attending to learn more about increasing fifth grade career awareness education.

PART III: LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the emphasis being placed on Work Based Learning at the state and federal levels, we anticipate this program will continue to grow and expand across the state. The implementation of The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) continues to support the adoption and implementation of career awareness programs in Grade 5. The recommendation is to continue with the current legislation.