

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

**SESSION LAW 2002-178  
SENATE BILL 1275**

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO IMPROVE THE STATE'S TRACKING OF DROPOUT DATA, TO EXAMINE THE ACCOUNTABILITY FORMULA TO REWARD HIGH SCHOOLS FOR REDUCING THEIR DROPOUT RATE, TO IDENTIFY CURRENT STATE TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND CAREER CENTERS AND TO COOPERATE WITH THE STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO ENCOURAGE CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT, TO STUDY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC RIGOR AND REDUCING THE DROPOUT RATE, TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO PLACE EXCELLENT, EXPERIENCED TEACHERS IN GRADES SEVEN THROUGH NINE, TO DIRECT THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE TO STUDY WHETHER RAISING THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGE TO EIGHTEEN WILL REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE, TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT A POLICY TO REQUIRE KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE TEACHERS TO TAKE THREE RENEWAL CREDITS IN READING METHODS COURSES, TO DIRECT THE UNC BOARD OF GOVERNORS TO STUDY WHETHER TO REQUIRE AT LEAST TWO READING METHODS COURSES FOR ALL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJORS AND AT LEAST ONE READING METHODS COURSE FOR ALL MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION MAJORS, TO DIRECT THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FISCAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, AND TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO TAKE OVER ALL POWERS AND DUTIES RELATED TO A SCHOOL WHEN THAT SCHOOL AND ITS LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION FAIL TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF AN ASSISTANCE TEAM ASSIGNED TO THAT SCHOOL.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

"(27a) Reducing School Dropout Rates. – The State Board of Education shall develop a statewide plan to improve the State's tracking of dropout data so that accurate and useful comparisons can be made over time. The plan shall include, at a minimum, how dropouts are counted and the methodology for calculating the dropout rate, the ability to track students' movements among schools and districts, and the ability to provide information on who drops out and why."

**SECTION 1.(b)** The State Board of Education shall make a report on this plan to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2002.

**SECTION 2.(a)** The State Board of Education shall examine the accountability system for high schools created under the School-Based Management and Accountability Program. In particular, the State Board shall review, and make appropriate changes to, the growth composite for high schools so that the composite

includes a growth standard that increases the weight currently given for a change in dropout rates, thus rewarding high schools for reducing dropout rates and improving graduation rates.

**SECTION 2.(b)** The State Board of Education, in cooperation with the State Board of Community Colleges, shall identify technical high schools and career centers currently in operation in the State and make recommendations to strengthen concurrent enrollment opportunities with the community colleges. The State Board shall report its findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2002.

**SECTION 2.(c)** The State Board of Education (Board) shall study the relationship between academic rigor and reducing the school dropout rate. As part of this study, the Board shall include the following:

- (1) The development of a proposal to accelerate the learning of students able to complete high school in three years;
- (2) The elimination of low-level classes at the middle and high school levels;
- (3) The examination of the appropriateness of electives and exploratory courses at the middle school level;
- (4) A review of current vocational courses to determine the rigor of the content; and
- (5) The development of up-to-date standards for vocational/technical teachers.

The Board shall report its findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by January 15, 2003.

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

"(42) Local boards of education are encouraged to adopt policies that require superintendents to assign to the core academic courses, in seventh through ninth grades, teachers who have at least four years' teaching experience and who have received within the last three years an overall rating on a formal evaluation that is at least above standard."

**SECTION 4.** The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee shall study whether raising the compulsory attendance age to 18 will reduce the dropout rate and increase the high school graduation rate. The Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the 2003 General Assembly.

**SECTION 5.(a)** The State Board of Education shall adopt a policy that requires kindergarten through eighth grade teachers to take three renewal credits in reading methods courses during each five-year license renewal cycle.

**SECTION 5.(b)** The University of North Carolina Board of Governors shall study whether to require at least two reading methods courses for all elementary education majors and at least one reading methods course for all middle grades education majors in teacher education programs. The study also shall examine appropriate reading-teaching pedagogy and reading-teaching methods to be required in these courses in light of G.S. 115C-81.2 and the requirements of the federal Reading First Program under Part B of Title I of P.L. 107-110. The study also shall document the course changes and personnel changes made to implement G.S. 115C-81.2. As part of the study, the Board shall review the reading methods course requirements by majors in the teacher education programs at Appalachian State and East Carolina University. The Board shall report its findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2002.

**SECTION 6.** The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee shall study the fiscal and instructional accountability of local school administrative units. As part of this study, the Committee shall:

- (1) Evaluate the fiscal management and instructional leadership provided by local school administrative units.

- (2) Analyze whether local school administrative units are utilizing their funding and resources in a proper, strategic manner with regard to their at-risk children.
- (3) Evaluate State fiscal controls that are available to ensure that local allocation of funding and resources is cost-effective and is appropriately focused on enhancing educational leadership, teaching the standard course of study, and improving student learning.
- (4) Analyze State and local procedures for identifying superintendents, principals, and teachers who need additional training or assistance in order to implement a strategic and cost-effective instructional program that meets the needs of all children, including at-risk children, so that they obtain a sound basic education by achieving grade level, or above, academic performance.
- (5) Identify current and possible actions that the State may implement in order to correct ineffective instructional leadership or teaching in a school or school system. In particular, the Committee shall ensure that fair and efficient procedures are available to the State for removing ineffective superintendents, principals, or teachers and for replacing them with effective, competent ones.

The Committee shall report its findings and any recommendations to the 2003 General Assembly.

**SECTION 7.** G.S. 115C-105.38 is amended by adding the following new subsection to read:

"(b1) Report to the State Board of Education if a school and its local board of education are not responsive to the team's recommendations. A copy of that report shall be made available to the local board, and the local board shall have an opportunity to respond. Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-36 and other provisions of this Chapter, if the State Board confirms that the school and local board have failed to take appropriate steps to improve student performance at that school, the State Board shall assume all powers and duties previously conferred upon that local board and that school and shall have general control and supervision of all matters pertaining to that school until student performance at the school meets or exceeds the standards set for the school. The State Board may, as it considers appropriate, delegate any powers and duties to that local board or school before the school meets or exceeds those standards."

**SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.  
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of  
September, 2002.

s/ Marc Basnight  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ James B. Black  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley  
Governor

Approved 4:15 p.m. this 31<sup>st</sup> day of October, 2002