

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

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**HOUSE BILL 765
Senate Education/Higher Education Committee Substitute Adopted 6/14/11**

Short Title: Study Length of School Year. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 7, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION TO STUDY THE CURRENT
3 LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IN NORTH CAROLINA AND TO DETERMINE
4 HOW LONG THE SCHOOL YEAR SHOULD BE.

5 Whereas, the Constitution of North Carolina reads as follows: "The people have a
6 right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that
7 right"; and

8 Whereas, the length of the school year in North Carolina, like many other states in
9 the United States, is currently a minimum of 180 teaching days, and 1,000 hours, and funds for
10 public education in the State are based on the length of the school term; and

11 Whereas, North Carolina law does not prohibit school districts from providing more
12 than 180 days of instruction time; and

13 Whereas, the seminal education report "A Nation at Risk" noted in 1984 that the
14 180-day school calendar had become outdated and could not sufficiently supply the kind of
15 instructional time that American students needed in a world of increasing complexity; and

16 Whereas, 180 instructional days consistently puts the United States at or near the
17 bottom of other industrialized nations, according to rankings of instructional time done by the
18 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and

19 Whereas, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) studies
20 show that the average time spent in the classroom by students in participating nations is 193,
21 translating into a 156-day instructional day gap for American students over a 12-year academic
22 career, or nearly one full school year.

23 Whereas, North Carolina's graduation rate continues to need to improve; and

24 Whereas, some experts contend that the current length of the school year does not
25 afford ample time to equip young North Carolinians with the knowledge and skills necessary to
26 compete in an increasingly competitive and global workplace; and

27 Whereas, studies document that approximately two-thirds of the grade 9
28 achievement gap between lower and higher income youth can be explained by unequal access
29 to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years; and

30 Whereas, studies have documented that most students lose about two months of
31 grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer break; and

32 Whereas, low-income students also lose more than two months in reading
33 achievement, despite the fact that their middle-class peers make slight gains; and

34 Whereas, children lose more than academic knowledge over the summer. Most
35 children, particularly children at high risk of obesity, gain weight more rapidly when they are
36 out of school during summer break; and



1 Whereas, students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer
2 vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of the summer; and

3 Whereas, North Carolina continues to spend precious resources on the remediation
4 of its students; and

5 Whereas, the State of North Carolina should explore the feasibility of extending its
6 school year and potentially being a model for the nation; Now, therefore,
7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly reaffirms its intent that every child in North
9 Carolina deserves an opportunity to a sound basic education.

10 **SECTION 2.** There is established a Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Current
11 Length of the School Year (Commission).

12 **SECTION 3.** The Commission shall be composed of 19 members as follows:

- 13 (1) Five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of
14 the House of Representatives.
- 15 (2) Five members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the
16 Senate.
- 17 (3) The chair of the North Carolina State Board of Education.
- 18 (4) The executive director of the North Carolina School Boards Association.
- 19 (5) The Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- 20 (6) The president of North Carolina Association of Educators, Inc.
- 21 (7) The executive director of the North Carolina Association of School
22 Administrators.
- 23 (8) The executive director of the Public School Forum of North Carolina.
- 24 (9) The executive director of the Professional Educators of North Carolina, Inc.
- 25 (10) The executive director of the N.C. Principals/Assistant Principals
26 Association, Inc.
- 27 (11) The executive director of the North Carolina Congress of Parents and
28 Teachers, Incorporated.

29 **SECTION 4.** The Commission shall study the following matters related to North
30 Carolina's educational needs:

- 31 (1) Strategies for making North Carolina's children ready to compete in the 21st
32 century.
- 33 (2) The cost of implementing a longer school year.
- 34 (3) A plan for implementing a longer school year.
- 35 (4) The impact of summer learning loss.
- 36 (5) The cost of remediation in the public schools, the community colleges, and
37 the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina.
- 38 (6) The impact of the current calendar on low-income and at-risk students.
- 39 (7) The impact of the current calendar on math and science scores.
- 40 (8) The achievement gap.

41 **SECTION 5.** The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate one
42 Representative as Cochair, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall designate one
43 Senator as Cochair. The Commission shall meet upon the call of the chairs. A quorum of the
44 Commission shall be 10 members. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by the
45 appointing authority.

46 **SECTION 6.** Members of the Commission shall receive per diem, subsistence, and
47 travel allowances in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate. The
48 Commission, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers provided for
49 under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet upon the call of the
50 Cochairs. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office
51 Building. With approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Legislative Services

1 Officer shall assign professional staff to assist the Commission in its work. The House of
2 Representatives' and the Senate's Directors of Legislative Assistants shall assign clerical staff to
3 the Commission, and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the
4 Commission. The Commission may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as
5 provided by G.S. 120-32.02. If the Commission hires a consultant, the consultant shall not be a
6 State employee or a person currently under contract with the State to provide services.

7 All State departments and agencies and local governments and their subdivisions
8 shall furnish the Commission with any information in their possession or available to them.

9 The Commission may apply for, receive, and accept grants of non-State funds or
10 other contribution as appropriate to assist in the performance of its duties.

11 **SECTION 7.** The Commission may make an interim report of its findings and
12 recommendations to the 2012 Regular Session of the 2011 General Assembly and shall make a
13 final report of its findings and recommendations to the 2013 General Assembly. The
14 Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2012, or the filing of its final report, whichever
15 occurs first.

16 **SECTION 8.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2011.