

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 760

Short Title: Opportunity Gap Task Force. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Blackwell, Brockman, Torbett, and Elmore (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Education - K-12, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 3, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE OPPORTUNITY GAP TASK FORCE.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** There is established the Opportunity Gap Task Force (Task Force).

5 **SECTION 2.** The Task Force shall consist of 14 members as follows:

- 6 (1) Three persons who are members of the House of Representatives at the time  
7 of appointment, at least one of whom represents the minority party, appointed  
8 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.  
9 (2) Three persons who are members of the Senate at the time of appointment, at  
10 least one of whom represents the minority party, appointed by the President  
11 Pro Tempore of the Senate.  
12 (3) The chair of the State Board of Education, or his or her designee.  
13 (4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction, or his or her designee.  
14 (5) The President of The University of North Carolina, or his or her designee.  
15 (6) The President of the North Carolina System of Community Colleges, or his or  
16 her designee.  
17 (7) The President of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities,  
18 Inc., or his or her designee.  
19 (8) The President and Chief Executive Officer of North Carolina Business  
20 Leaders for Education, doing business as BEST NC (Business for Educational  
21 Success and Transformation), or his or her designee.  
22 (9) The Executive Director of the NC Association for Public Charter Schools, or  
23 his or her designee.  
24 (10) The Senior Education Advisor to the Governor, or his or her designee.

25 **SECTION 3.** Appointments to the Task Force shall be made no later than August 1,  
26 2021. In making their appointments, the appointing authorities shall consider the geographic and  
27 cultural diversity of the State and the value to the Task Force of experience in business, education,  
28 and philanthropic organizations. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

29 **SECTION 4.(a)** The Task Force shall (i) study the opportunity gap, (ii) consider  
30 effective approaches and best practices from across the country to close the opportunity gap in  
31 grades kindergarten through 12, and (iii) propose a plan to reduce the opportunity gap for all  
32 subgroups by July 1, 2030. For the purposes of this act, the "opportunity gap" refers to the  
33 significant disparity in the academic performance and postsecondary readiness of students  
34 between any of the following subgroups: races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, genders,  
35 English-language proficiencies, and urban, rural, or suburban domiciles.



1           **SECTION 4.(b)** As part of its study, the Task Force shall consider the following:

- 2           (1) Best practices in public education.
- 3           (2) Professional development for teachers.
- 4           (3) Parental involvement in public education.
- 5           (4) Disparities in disciplinary consequences, including suspensions and
- 6           expulsions.
- 7           (5) Preparation and development of school leadership.
- 8           (6) Effective use of data to reduce the opportunity gap.
- 9           (7) Access to effective educators.
- 10          (8) Access to rigorous coursework, including content and courses.
- 11          (9) Access to effective school leadership.
- 12          (10) Innovative budgeting practices.
- 13          (11) The value of incorporating mastery-based learning into curriculum.
- 14          (12) Effective access to and use of technology, including (i) connectivity for
- 15          students and their families, (ii) devices, and (iii) software.
- 16          (13) The final report and recommendations of the Task Force to Develop a
- 17          Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE).
- 18          (14) Any other issue the Task Force deems relevant to its study.

19           **SECTION 4.(c)** At a minimum, the Task Force shall extend invitations to receive  
20 input from all of the following:

- 21          (1) Two or more parents of students adversely affected by the opportunity gap.
- 22          (2) Two or more teachers employed in a North Carolina public school who have
- 23          demonstrated significant success in reducing the opportunity gap in the
- 24          classroom.
- 25          (3) Two or more principals employed in a North Carolina public school who have
- 26          demonstrated significant success in reducing the opportunity gap at a school.
- 27          (4) Two or more superintendents employed in a local school administrative unit
- 28          who have demonstrated significant success in reducing the opportunity gap at
- 29          a local school administrative unit.
- 30          (5) Organizations that have demonstrated success in closing the opportunity gap,
- 31          including, but not limited to, Communities in Schools of North Carolina, Inc.
- 32          (6) The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission.
- 33          (7) The myFutureNC Commission.
- 34          (8) The Governor's Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education.
- 35          (9) The B-3 Interagency Council.
- 36          (10) The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, Inc.'s, Pathways to
- 37          Grade-Level Reading Initiative.
- 38          (11) The Executive Director of NC Child, or his or her designee.
- 39          (12) The President of Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina, or his or
- 40          her designee.
- 41          (13) The Public School Forum of North Carolina.
- 42          (14) The North Carolina Principal Fellows and Transforming Principal Preparation
- 43          Program.

44           **SECTION 4.(d)** The Task Force shall include the following in its proposed plan to  
45 reduce the opportunity gap for all subgroups:

- 46          (1) Information identifying opportunity gaps that exist between races, ethnicities,
- 47          socioeconomic statuses, genders, English-language proficiencies, and urban,
- 48          rural, or suburban domiciles.
- 49          (2) Recommendations for closing or significantly reducing the opportunity gaps
- 50          identified by the Task Force.
- 51          (3) Benchmarks for implementation of the proposed plan.

1           **SECTION 5.** The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro  
2 Tempore of the Senate shall each select a cochair for the Task Force from among its members.  
3 The Task Force shall meet upon the call of its cochairs. A quorum of the Task Force is a majority  
4 of its members. No action may be taken except by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum  
5 is present. The Task Force, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers  
6 provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Task Force may  
7 contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services, as provided by G.S. 120-32.02. If the  
8 Task Force hires a consultant, the consultant shall not be a State employee or a person currently  
9 under contract with the State to provide services.

10           Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation but may receive travel  
11 and subsistence as follows:

- 12           (1)     Members who are officials or employees of a State agency or unit of local  
13                 government, in accordance with G.S. 138-6.
- 14           (2)     Members who serve in the General Assembly, in accordance with  
15                 G.S. 120-3.1.
- 16           (3)     All other members at the rate established in G.S. 138-5.

17           All State departments and agencies and local governments and their subdivisions shall  
18 furnish the Task Force with any requested information in their possession or available to them.

19           **SECTION 6.** The Legislative Services Officer shall assign professional and clerical  
20 staff to assist the Task Force in its work. The Director of Legislative Assistants of the House of  
21 Representatives and the Director of Legislative Assistants of the Senate shall assign clerical  
22 support to the Task Force.

23           **SECTION 7.** Meetings of the Task Force shall begin no later than September 1,  
24 2021. The Task Force shall submit a final report on the results of its study, including its proposed  
25 plan and any proposed legislation, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on or  
26 before December 1, 2022, by filing a copy of the report with the Office of the President Pro  
27 Tempore of the Senate, the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Joint  
28 Legislative Education Oversight Committee, and the Legislative Library. The Task Force shall  
29 terminate on December 1, 2022, or upon the filing of its final report, whichever comes first.

30           **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.