

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1993 SESSION

CHAPTER 117
SENATE BILL 878

AN ACT TO CREATE THE NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION STANDARDS
AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"ARTICLE 8A.

"North Carolina Education Standards and Accountability Commission.

"§ 115C-105.1. Creation of the Commission.

The General Assembly believes that all children can learn. The General Assembly further believes that all graduates of North Carolina public schools should have mastered the skills required to become productive members of the workforce and succeed in life. The General Assembly further believes that having a highly qualified workforce is essential to strengthening North Carolina's competitive position in the modern world economy, improving workforce productivity, and ensuring a more prosperous future for all our citizens. With that mission as its guide, the General Assembly creates the North Carolina Education Standards and Accountability Commission.

The Commission shall be located administratively in the Office of the Governor but shall exercise all its prescribed statutory powers independently of the Office of the Governor.

"§ 115C-105.2. Membership.

(a) The North Carolina Education Standards and Accountability Commission shall consist of 25 members: 17 appointed by the Governor including a representative of the Department of Public Instruction knowledgeable about program and curriculum and a representative of the Department of Public Instruction knowledgeable about research and development, four appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives including at least one member of the House of Representatives, and four appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate including at least one member of the Senate. The membership of the Commission should include (i) business, education, civic, government, legislative, and nonprofit and foundation leaders from across the State, (ii) at least two persons who are parents of public school children at the time of their appointment, and (iii) representatives from The University of North Carolina and the Department of Community Colleges. In making appointments, the appointing authorities should consider the geographic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic diversity of the State. Appointments to the Commission shall be made prior to August 1, 1993.

(b) The Governor shall designate a member of the Commission to serve as chair.

(c) Commission members shall serve for four years. If a vacancy occurs, the appointing officer shall appoint another person to serve for the balance of the unexpired term.

"§ 115C-105.3. Purpose.

The purpose of the Commission is to develop high and clearly defined education standards for the public schools of North Carolina. These standards shall specify the skills and the knowledge that high school graduates should possess in order to be competitive in the modern economy. The purpose of the Commission is also to develop fair and valid assessments to assure that high school graduates in North Carolina meet these standards.

These high standards and assessments shall focus on the key skills needed by students as they strive to be successful after high school and shall reflect the high expectations for every student demanded by the State's education mission in G.S. 115C-81(a), 115C-238.1, and 115C-238.13(a). Once these key skills are identified, parents, teachers, and the entire school community should be encouraged to help each student meet the student's fullest potential.

"§ 115C-105.4. Duties of the Commission.

(a) The Commission shall:

- (1) Develop standards that outline what a high school graduate should know and a series of benchmarks throughout the K-12 grades structured to identify how well a student is progressing towards the graduation standards. Standards shall include how well a student is able to apply knowledge gained in such core subject areas as mathematics, science, communication, history, geography, and the arts.
- (2) Define a system of benchmarks at appropriate grade levels requiring students to demonstrate an ability to understand and apply what is expected of them in these standards.
- (3) Work with the Department of Public Instruction to ensure that end-of-course assessments for core subjects are consistent with these standards and with benchmarks set by the Commission leading to these standards.
- (4) Review and recommend a system of benchmark measurements that appropriately assess the requirements as outlined in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection. The Commission may consider multiple methods of developmental assessment.
- (5) Recommend ways to ensure that each student is challenged to the fullest extent of the student's ability by describing what actions shall be taken when a student's level of achievement on a standard is less than the student's potential.
- (6) Recommend methods to measure each high school graduate's performance on the standards, including a system that incorporates a variety of measurement instruments used to assess a student's progress

throughout the student's school career. These measures may be used to assess a graduate's preparedness for work, continued schooling, and successful living.

- (7) Consider how the system of standards can serve the needs of exceptional children.
- (8) Consider and recommend any necessary refinements to the substance or implementation of the Standard Course of Study and the Testing Program.
- (9) Recommend the best methods of comparing North Carolina students' performance to that of students in other states and across the nation.
- (10) Recommend how standards and performance measures can accommodate the growing and changing body of knowledge.
- (11) Recommend any necessary statutory amendments to implement its recommendations.

(b) As a basis for carrying out the duties set out in subsection (a) of this section, the Commission shall:

- (1) Consider State education initiatives, including the Standard Course of Study and the North Carolina Testing Program.
- (2) Hold public hearings as it deems necessary.
- (3) Seek to reach a broad statewide consensus on what students should learn and know in order to be successful high school graduates.
- (4) Review national efforts to develop standards and assessments, including the work of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

"§ 115C-105.5. Reporting requirements.

- (1) No later than July 1, 1994, the Commission shall provide an initial report on standards and assessments to the State Board of Education. This report shall include progress being made on the development of standards, benchmarks, and related assessments. It shall also include recommendations for education and training of educators to assist in incorporating standards into existing classrooms.
- (2) The Commission shall recommend to the State Board of Education standards and a system of assessments, and if the State Board adopts the standards and system of assessments, the Commission and the State Board shall use the following schedule:
 - a. In the Spring semester of the 1994-95 school year, a field or pilot test of the system of assessments shall be given in a limited number of school units.
 - b. During the 1994-95 school year, school personnel shall be educated and trained to implement the system of assessments.
 - c. During the 1994-95 school year, there shall be a public awareness campaign regarding the standards and assessments.

- d. In the 1995-1996 school year, standards shall be implemented in all school systems, and in the Spring semester of the 1995-96 school year, the assessments shall be administered to all North Carolina high school seniors and in every local school administrative unit.
 - e. In the Spring semester of the 1995-96 school year, the first set of assessment data shall be released publicly.
 - f. During the 1995-96 and subsequent school years, appropriate designations shall be implemented on the diplomas of graduation to reflect the students' achievement.
 - g. No later than the Spring semester of the year 2000, every graduating high school senior shall be required to achieve these standards as a condition for receiving a diploma.
- (3) The Commission shall annually advise the General Assembly, the Governor, and the State Board of Education on the standards and assessments.

"§ 115C-105.6. Staff.

The Commission may contract for professional, clerical, and consultant services. The Commission may also contract with an individual who has an excellent national reputation in the area of school standards and assessments to facilitate the work of the Commission. Professional and clerical staff positions for the Commission may be filled by persons whose services are loaned to the Commission to fulfill the work of the Commission.

"§ 115C-105.7. Space and equipment.

The Office of the Governor and the Department of Public Instruction shall provide meeting rooms, telephones, office space, equipment, and supplies to the Commission and shall be reimbursed from the Commission's budget.

"§ 115C-105.8. Compensation.

Commission members shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowances in accordance with G.S. 138-5, 138-6, or 120-3.1, as appropriate.

"§ 115C-105.9. Assistance of other agencies.

Upon the request of the Commission, the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Community Colleges, and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall furnish the Commission with any nonconfidential information in their possession or available to them.

"§ 115C-105.10. Powers and duties of the State Board regarding the recommendations of the Commission.

The State Board of Education shall consider the standards and the system of assessments recommended by the Commission in accordance with G.S. 115C-105.5(2) and if adopted, the State Board shall implement the standards and the system of assessments with the schedule set out in G.S. 115C-105.5(2)."

Sec. 2. This act becomes effective upon appropriation by the General Assembly of funds for the implementation of this act. The Commission created by this act terminates December 31, 2000.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 3rd day of June, 1993.

Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

Daniel Blue, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives