

Article 6C.

Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program.

**§ 115C-64.15. North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Commission.**

(a) There is created the North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Commission (Commission). The Commission shall be located administratively in the Department of Public Instruction but shall exercise all its prescribed powers independently of the Department of Public Instruction. Of the funds appropriated for the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program established under G.S. 115C-64.16, up to ten percent (10%) of those funds each fiscal year may be used by the Department of Public Instruction to provide technical assistance and administrative assistance, including staff, to the Commission and for reimbursements and expenses for the Commission for the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program.

(b) The Commission shall consist of the following 14 members:

- (1) The Secretary of Commerce or his or her designee.
- (2) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or his or her designee.
- (3) The Chair of the State Board of Education or his or her designee.
- (4) The President of The University of North Carolina or his or her designee.
- (5) The President of the North Carolina Community College System or his or her designee.
- (6) Three members appointed by the Governor who have experience in education.
- (7) Three members appointed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as provided in G.S. 120-121, who have experience in businesses operating in North Carolina.
- (8) Three members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, as provided in G.S. 120-121, who have experience in businesses operating in North Carolina.

(b1) Members appointed by the Governor or the General Assembly shall serve for three-year terms commencing July 1 of the year of appointment and may serve successive terms.

(c) The Commission members shall elect a chair from the membership of the Commission. The Commission shall meet at least three times annually on the call of the Chair or as additionally provided by the Commission. A quorum is six members of the Commission. Members may not vote by proxy.

(d) The Commission shall develop and administer the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program, as established under G.S. 115C-64.16, in collaboration with the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., and make awards of grants under the Program.

(d1) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-134, s. 7.43, effective July 1, 2023.

(d2) The North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., shall provide assistance and support to grantees for initiating, expanding, improving, and promoting career and technical education initiatives.

(e) The Commission shall publish a report on the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program on or before April 30 of each year. The report shall be submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, the Fiscal Research Division, the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the State Board of Education, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Board

of Governors of The University of North Carolina. The report shall include at least all of the following information:

- (1) An accounting of how funds and personnel resources were utilized for the program and their impact on student achievement, retention, and employability.
- (2) Recommended statutory and policy changes.
- (3) Recommendations for improvement of the program.
- (4) For the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Grants, recommendations on increasing availability of grants after the first two years to include additional local school administrative units, charter schools, or providing additional grants to prior recipients. (2013-360, s. 8.34(a); 2013-363, s. 3.10(a); 2014-100, s. 23.1(e); 2017-57, ss. 7.23F(a), 7.23G(b); 2019-165, s. 5; 2020-78, s. 2.2(a); 2023-134, s. 7.43.)

**§ 115C-64.16. The Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program; innovation grants.**

(a) Program Establishment. – There is established the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program (Program) to foster innovation in education that will lead to more students graduating career and college and to prioritize the inclusion of students in sixth and seventh grades through grant awards provided to selected local school administrative units and charter schools.

(a1) Types of Grant Awards. – Funds appropriated to the Program shall be used to award competitive grants depending on the needs of the State, as determined by the Commission, by dividing the grants between each type as innovation grants pursuant to the provisions of this section or as grants for grade expansion for career and technical education pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 115C-64.17.

(a2) Innovation Grants. – Competitive grants shall be awarded to a charter school, an individual school in a local school administrative unit, a local school administrative unit, or a regional partnership of more than one local school administrative unit to advance comprehensive, high-quality education that equips teachers and other hired personnel with the knowledge and skill required to succeed with all students. Before receiving an innovation grant, applicants must meet all of the following conditions:

- (1) Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with either a public or private university or a community college.
  - (2) Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with regional businesses and business leaders.
  - (3) Demonstrate the ability to sustain innovation once grant funding ends.
- (b) Applicant Categories and Specific Requirements for Innovation Grants. –
- (1) Individual schools. – Charter schools and individual public schools in local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
    - a. Partnerships with business and industry to determine the skills and competencies needed for students' transition into growth sectors of the regional economy.
    - b. Aligned pathways to employment, including students' acquisition of college credit or industry recognized credentials.

- c. Development of systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement.
  - (2) Local school administrative units. – Local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
    - a. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation.
    - b. Appointment of a senior leader to manage and sustain the change process with a specific focus on providing parents with a portfolio of meaningful options among schools.
  - (3) Regional partnerships of two or more local school administrative units. – Partnerships of two or more local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
    - a. Implementation of resources of partnered local school administrative units in creating a tailored workforce development system for the regional economy and fostering innovation in each of the partnered local school administrative units.
    - b. Promotion of the development of knowledge and skills in career clusters of critical importance to the region.
    - c. Benefits of the shared strengths of local businesses and higher education.
    - d. Usage of technology to deliver instruction over large geographic regions and build networks with industry.
    - e. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation that can be replicated in other local school administrative units.
- (c) Consideration of Factors in Awarding of Innovation Grants. – All applications must include information on at least the following in order to be considered for an innovation grant:
  - (1) Describe the aligned pathways from school to high-growth careers in regional economies.
  - (2) Leverage technology to efficiently and effectively drive teacher and principal development, connect students and teachers to online courses and resources, and foster virtual learning communities among faculty, higher education partners, and business partners.
  - (3) Establish a comprehensive approach to enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators to successfully implement the proposed innovative program and to graduate all students ready for work and college.
  - (4) Link to a proven provider of professional development services for teachers and administrators capable of providing evidence-based training and tools aligned with the goals of the proposed innovative program.
  - (5) Form explicit partnerships with businesses and industry, which may include business advisory councils, internship programs, and other customized projects aligned with relevant workforce skills.
  - (6) Partner with community colleges or public or private universities to enable communities to challenge every student to graduate with workplace credentials or college credit.
  - (7) Align K-12 and postsecondary instruction and performance expectations to reduce the need for college remediation courses.

- (8) Secure input from parents to foster broad ownership for school choice options and to foster greater understanding of the need for continued education beyond high school.
- (9) Provide a description of the funds that will be used and a proposed budget for each of the grant years.
- (10) Describe the source of matching funds required in subsection (d) of this section.
- (11) Establish a strategy to achieve meaningful analysis of program outcomes due to the receipt of grant funds under this section.

(d) **Matching Private and Local Funds for Innovation Grants.** – All innovation grant applicants must match fifty percent (50%) of all State dollars. Matching funds shall not include other State funds. Matching funds may include in-kind contributions.

(e) **Awards for Innovation Grants.** – Any innovation grants awarded by the Commission may be spent over a five-year period from the initial award. Grants may be awarded for new or existing projects. Grant funds shall not revert but shall be available until expended.

(f) **Innovation Grant Recipient Reporting Requirements.** – No later than September 1 of each year, an innovation grant recipient shall submit to the Commission an annual report for the preceding grant year that describes the academic progress made by the students and the implementation of program initiatives. (2013-360, s. 8.34(a); 2014-100, s. 23.1(b), (d); 2014-115, s. 48; 2023-134, s. 7.43.)

**§ 115C-64.17. Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Grants.**

(a) **CTE Grade Expansion Grants.** – Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion grants shall be awarded under the Program for the purpose of expanding career and technical education (CTE) programs by prioritizing the inclusion of students in sixth and seventh grade through grant awards provided to selected local school administrative units and charter schools for up to seven years. Grant funds shall be allocated to selected local school administrative units and charter schools as competitive grants, to the extent funds are available, of up to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for the 2018-2019 fiscal year and subsequent fiscal years. Grant funds shall be used only for employing additional licensed personnel in career and technical education areas, career development coordination areas, and support service areas necessary for expanding the CTE program to sixth and seventh grade students. For a local school administrative unit, the funds may be used for CTE programs at one or more schools in the unit. Grant funds allocated to the local school administrative unit or charter school each fiscal year shall not revert but shall be available for the purpose of the grant program until expended.

(b) **Consideration of Factors in Awarding of CTE Grade Expansion Grants.** – Local school administrative units and charter schools applying for CTE grade expansion grants shall submit an application that includes at least the following information:

- (1) A plan for expansion of the CTE program to sixth and seventh grade students, including the specific programs that will be expanded, the significance of CTE in the local school administrative unit or charter school, and how a grade expansion would enhance the education program and the community.
- (2) A request for the amount of funds, a description of how the funds will be used, and any other sources of funds available to accomplish the purposes of this program.

- (3) A proposed budget for seven years that provides detail on the use of the amount of funds to add personnel, increase career development efforts, and provide support services.
- (4) A strategy to achieve meaningful analysis of program outcomes due to the receipt of grant funds under this section.

(c) Selection of CTE Grade Expansion Grant Recipients. – For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Commission shall accept applications for a grant until November 30, 2017. For subsequent fiscal years that funds are made available for the CTE grade expansion grants, the Commission shall accept applications for a grant until August 1 of each year. The Commission shall consult with the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., to select recipients in a manner that considers diversity among the pool of applicants, including geographic location, location of industries in the area in which a local school administrative unit or charter school is located, and the size of the student population served by the unit, or charter school, in order to award funds to the extent possible to grant recipients that represent different regions and characteristics of the State. The Commission shall recommend recipients of the grants to the State Board of Education. The State Board, upon consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall approve the recipients of grant awards.

(d) Allocation of Funds. – Of the funds available for the Program in each fiscal year, the Commission shall first allocate funds to applicants who received CTE grade expansion grant funds for the prior fiscal year for up to seven years. After funds are allocated to prior fiscal year grant recipients, any remaining funds may be used by the Commission to select new grant recipients, as provided in G.S. 115C-64.16(a1). The Commission shall establish rules regarding any requirements for grant recipients to continue eligibility to receive funds each fiscal year, including timely and accurate reporting as required under subsection (e) of this section.

(e) Reporting Requirements. – No later than August 1 of each year, for up to seven years after the initial grant award, a grant recipient shall submit to the Department of Public Instruction, Local Planning Systems Regional Services staff within the Division of Career and Technical Education, an annual report for the preceding year in which CTE grade expansion grant funds were expended that provides at least the following information on the program for sixth and seventh grade students:

- (1) The use of grant funds, including the CTE programs and courses that have been expanded in the local school administrative unit or charter school to include sixth and seventh grade students.
- (2) The number of students enrolled in CTE courses as part of the expansion.
- (3) The number of students who subsequently enrolled in CTE courses in high school.
- (4) The number of students who subsequently participated in internships, cooperative education, or apprenticeship programs.
- (5) The number of students who subsequently earned (i) college credit and (ii) approved industry certification and credentials.
- (6) Any other information the Division of Career and Technical Education deems necessary.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a report to the Commission by October 15 of each year based on the information reported to the Local Planning Systems Regional Services staff under this subsection, including how the grant recipients compare to CTE programs statewide and whether the programs are aligned with the Master Plan for Career and Technical Education

adopted by the State Board. (2017-57, s. 7.23F(b); 2017-212, s. 2.2; 2020-78, s. 2.2(b); 2023-134, s. 7.43.)