



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

5th Grade Career Awareness Program

§115C-157

Date Due: November 15, 2021
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2020-2021

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OVERVIEW

The report was prepared in accordance with requirements of G.S. 115C-157.

§ 115C-157. Responsibility of local boards of education:

- (a) Each local school administrative unit shall provide free appropriate career and technical education instruction, activities, and services in accordance with the provisions of this Part for all youth, with priority given to youth in grades eight through 12, who elect the instruction and shall have responsibility for administering the instruction, activities, and services in accordance with federal and State law and State Board of Education policies.
- (b) Each local school administrative unit shall offer as part of its career and technical education program at least two work-based learning opportunities that are related to career and technical education instruction. A work-based learning opportunity shall consist of on-the-job training through an internship, cooperative education, or an apprenticeship program meeting the requirements of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes.
- (c) Each local board of education is encouraged to implement a career awareness program for students in grade five to educate students on the career and technical education programs offered in the local school administrative unit. A local board of education that adopts a career awareness program for fifth grade students shall report on program activities and student outcomes from the prior school year to the State Board of Education by October 1 of each year. By November 15 of each year, the State Board shall submit a consolidated report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on program outcomes and any legislative recommendations based on local board of education reports. (1977, c. 490, s. 2; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1993, c. 180, s. 3; 2004-124, s. 7.15(c); 2017-57, s. 7.23H(e).)

PART I: ACTIVITIES

The CTE Division developed and released a Survey Tool to all Public School Units (PSUs). The tool collected activities completed during the 2019-20 school year and included the following items: "How did your PSU participate in the following 5th Grade Career Awareness Activities:"

1. Middle School Tours
2. High School Tours
3. Career Related Field Trips / Business Tours
4. Job Shadowing Opportunities
5. Guest Speakers
6. Career Fairs
7. Career Interest Inventories
8. Other Career Awareness Activities / Events

Survey Response: Though participation in the program is not required, we were pleased this year, the fourth year of the program, to have achieved a 98% response rate with 113 PSUs providing feedback, up slightly from 110 respondents in 2019-20. These numbers represent a large contrast to the 46% response rate during the first year of reporting (2017-2018).

PART II: STUDENT OUTCOMES

NCDPI CTE is pleased the results of the 5th Grade Career Awareness survey indicated approximately 79,320 5th grade students experienced a career awareness activity related to CTE programs offered in their respective PSUs during the 2020-21 school year. This is an increase from the 50,841 5th grade students in respective PSUs from the 2019-20 school year.

Many districts reported plans to engage students in activities such as middle and high school visits, field trips and business tours, guest speakers, and other events were cancelled or postponed until students were permitted to safely reassemble. However, educators and PSU leadership pivoted exceptionally well and increased the emphasis on virtual career awareness activities. This year's data displays more virtual guest speakers, career fairs, and other creative career awareness activities and events than previously experienced.

The reported data from all PSUs implementing a Career Awareness Program is reflected in the table below.

Career Awareness Event Type	Number of 5th Grade Students Participating	Number of PSUs Participating
Middle School Tours	22,446	46
High School Tours	393	11
Career-Related Field Trips / Business Tours	2,445	12
Job Shadowing Opportunities	152	3
Guest Speakers	12,434	39
Career Fairs	8,222	29
Career Interest Inventories	17,865	45
Other Career Awareness Activities / Events	15,363	34

NCDPI CTE is increasing efforts to generate tools and resources for 5th grade educators in North Carolina as well as engaging School Counselors, CTE Directors and Administrators, Career Development Coordinators, and other NC educators in working with 5th grade students.

Efforts by the NCDPI CTE staff include: conducting a session at the annual CTE Summer Conference sharing best practices and data collected on Career Awareness Programs; generating publications to serve all NC educators as resources for increasing 5th grade career awareness education; encouraging PSUs to share Career Awareness Programs and/or resources used at the local level with other PSUs by way of online resources hosted by the NCDPI CTE staff; hosting webinars and "Collaboration Stations" for local CTE staff, such as Career Development Coordinators and CTE Directors, to increase awareness on 5th grade career awareness education; and generating professional development opportunities for any North Carolina educators interested in attending to learn more about increasing 5th grade career awareness education to be held in the Fall of 2021.

Before administering the 2020-21 5th Grade Career Awareness Program Survey, CTE staff at NCDPI re-evaluated the survey used in previous years in order to make improvements to the survey data and outcomes. The NCDPI CTE staff also garnered the opinions of local CTE staff members across North Carolina to better understand the proficiencies or issues associated with the survey. After which, the NDPI CTE team worked to update the survey including the following changes: decreased the survey from roughly 90 questions to 30 questions while still collecting all necessary and important information; updates survey questions to decrease the possibility of data duplication; decreased the average survey completion time from 77 minutes to 41 minutes; changed the survey format to require one cumulative survey response per PSU per school year rather than asking local CTE staff to submit the survey numerous times (oftentimes local staff would submit one or more survey per activity type, which resulted in the NCDPI CTE staff receiving nearly 450 submissions per year). Before administering the new survey, it was vetted by a group of knowledgeable CTE staff at NCDPI, staff at the PSU level, typical survey takers, and the CTE Advisory Board.

Also new to the 5th Grade Career Awareness Program Survey this year was a prompt to capture and report any student comments, quotes, or stories about their 5th grade career awareness experiences. The following responses were anonymously submitted:

- *"Don't let anyone tell you can't own your own business or that you won't make good money doing it."*
- *"I like that I can make money in a career and give a large portion of it back to the community and to those that need it."*
- *"A career I'm interested in is zoology because I love working with animals."
"A career I am interested in is military or cop, this career interested me because my father was in the military and I want the world to be a better place."
"A career I am interested in is a pre-K teacher because I love kids and I think they are so cute."
"I'm interested in being a fashion designer, because I am interested in the designs and colors and combining things I think look nice."
"A career I am interested in is a house flipper because I want to build and help people with their furniture."*
- *"Many students were very appreciative and interested in completing the parent interview and allowed them to connect with their parents on their career as well as learn more about a specific career. Many of them also reached out to me and let me know they enjoyed the career videos and expressed interest in some careers they didn't know anything about previously and said how much they learned from the different videos."*
- *"We had some of our 5th graders describe what their parents or relatives do for their job prior to exploring the careers. They then described to us things they learned that they did not know those relatives actually do in their career. The results were amazing and the difference in what they thought their relatives/parents do for a living vs what actually is required by that career were very different. It was a great way to get them interested in exploring careers!"*
- *"We had a virtual career week with 5th grade students interviewing and recording a friend or family member about their career. Students told me they enjoyed our virtual career day."*

- *“The students highly enjoyed the RIASEC inventory to see what their career and interest matched. Students enjoyed and were excited about the different careers that they were exposed to.”*
- *“Students were very interested in the number of years that it may take to go to school for their future career interest. I believe that College and Career Week benefitted students while allowing them to gain knowledge about school and careers due to their engagement and questions asked. Students really enjoyed learning about a career that matched their interests. they loved learning about the salary - how much money they could potentially make in their future career! It sparked great conversations about how their future career dreams are related to what they are learning in school now.”*
- Student quotes during and after career awareness activities:
 - *"What is Hospitality and Tourism...that sounds like fun!"*
 - *"Wow, Disney would be a fun job!"*
 - *"I didn't know my mom spent this much on groceries!"*
 - *"Can we use coupons?"*
 - *"I'd like to be an artist."*
 - *"I learned that there are many different jobs that you can get when working in food service like head cook, cook, and food service managers."*
 - *"I learned that being a paramedic can be pretty fun. I want to be a paramedic because I really like helping people and meeting new people."*
 - *"Two things I learned are to be kind to people because they will remember how you treat them and to ask questions when you want to."*

NCDPI CTE collaborates with the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission on two grants: The Education and Workforce Innovation Fund and the 6th and 7th Grade Expansion Grant. The 6th and 7th Grade Expansion Grant positively impacts fifth grade career awareness by nature, as it employs Career Development Coordinators and CTE Educators in 23 school districts who are supporting activities that often engage 5th graders as well.

PART III: LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the emphasis being placed on Work-based Learning at the state and federal levels, we anticipate this program will continue to grow and expand across the state. The implementation of The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) beginning with the 2020-21 school year will support the adoption and implementation of career awareness programs in the 5th grade. **The recommendation is to continue with the current legislation.**