



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, 2022

DPI Chronological Schedule, 2021-2022

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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 2021-22 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 fifth year of the program, to have achieved a 100% response rate with 116 PSUs providing feedback. This is an increase from the 98% response rate from PSUs in the 2020-2021 reporting period. 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 that the results of the 5th Grade Career Awareness survey indicated approximately 163,075 fifth grade students were exposed to career awareness related to the CTE programs offered in their respective PSUs during the 2021-22 school year. This number does include some duplicative data between different career awareness event types. This is an increase from the 79,320 from the 2020-21 school year and 50,841 fifth grade students exposed to these programs in their respective PSUs for the 2019-20 school year.

Just as was reported in 2021, NCDPI CTE believes these numbers were severely impacted this school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With that, many online activities increased across North Carolina including virtual guest speakers, career fairs, and other creative career awareness activities and events than ever. Some of these activities include vision boards, ABC's activities, former student videos, teacher surveys and guided questions, and more.

The reported data from all the PSUs that implemented a Career Awareness Program reflect the following information:

Career Awareness Event Type	Number of 5th Grade Students Participating	Number of PSUs Participating
Middle School Tours	45,487	96
High School Tours	5,396	20
Career-Related Field Trips / Business Tours	14,112	44
Job Shadowing Opportunities	939	6
Guest Speakers	32,446	74
Career Fairs	19,600	50
Career Interest Inventories	24,351	60
Other Career Awareness Activities / Events	20,744	44

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, Career Development Coordinators, and other NC educators in working with 5th grade students.

Some efforts by the NCDPI CTE staff are as follows: 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 their 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.

Lastly, the 5th Grade Career Awareness Program Survey includes the prompt to provide any educator or student comments, quotes, or stories about their 5th grade career awareness experiences. The following responses were anonymously submitted by educators:

- “Students were extremely excited to hear and see so many opportunities in CTE. They cannot wait to get to the middle school.”
- “5th grade students were excited to see the pathways offered at the middle school and high school.”
- “The children were excited to have an opportunity to see pictures of various career choices. Some of the children were exposed to some of the careers, and some the students asked additional questions. Most of the students had career dreams and visions.”
- “This was our first try with a vehicle career fair for our entire 5th grade population. We had an overwhelmingly positive response from the students and from the schools / teachers / admin that participated. All of our vehicles in attendance covered all but 2 categories of career pathways. All vehicles also were all hands on, which was wonderful! We will definitely continue this every year.”
- “The 5th grade students were delighted to tour Jones Senior High School's grades 6-8 wing and grades 9-12 wing. They also were given the opportunity to visit each Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) booth. We did a team building strategy and students reported back on their iPads what they enjoyed most about their visit.”
- “Students enjoyed the opportunities to make informed decisions about their career choices and how career clusters can be used to make decision.”
- “We held a "Touch a Truck Fair". Students were very excited about new career opportunities and seeing equipment that they are not typically exposed to.”
- “We called it our 5th Grade Career Awareness "Career Expo;” The Career Expo was a two-day event. The first day, guest speakers were assigned to our three elementary schools and rotated between 5th grade classrooms every 15-20 minutes. On the second day of the Expo, career focused vehicles and equipment were displayed at one of our elementary schools and all 5th grade students were transported to the school. The students had a great time touching and getting on various pieces of equipment - fire trucks, police cars, utility vehicles, etc.”

The following responses were anonymously submitted by educators on behalf of students:

- "Wow, I didn't know we had all these things in Person County and at our school."
- "This is the best time I have had all year!"

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 continues to support the adoption and implementation of career awareness programs in Grade 5. **The recommendation is to continue with the current legislation.**