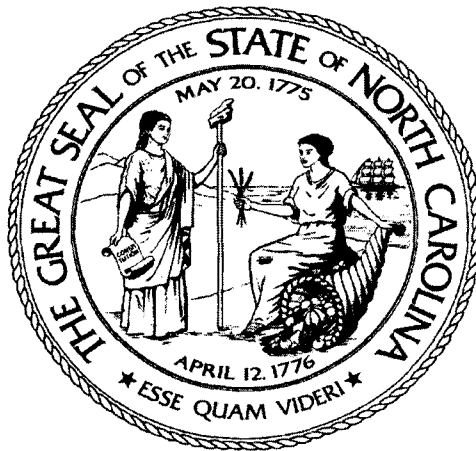


LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON COMMON CORE STATE
STANDARDS
NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**REPORT TO THE
2014 SESSION
of the
2013 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF NORTH CAROLINA**

APRIL, 2014

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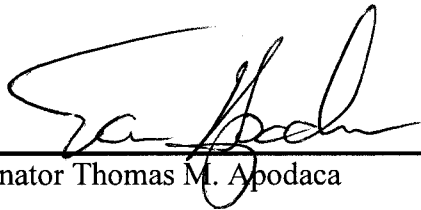
TRANSMITTAL LETTER

May 13, 2014

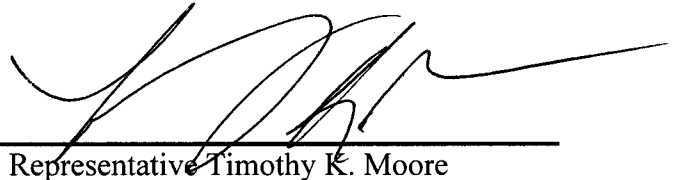
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 2014 REGULAR SESSION
OF THE 2013 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Research Commission herewith submits to you for your consideration its report and recommendations to the 2014 Regular Session of the 2013 General Assembly. The report was prepared by the Legislative Research Commission's Committee on Common Core State Standards, pursuant to G.S. 120-30.17(1).

Respectfully submitted,



Senator Thomas M. Apodaca



Representative Timothy K. Moore

Co-Chairs
Legislative Research Commission

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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

2013 – 2014

Senator Thomas M. Apodaca
Co-Chair

Representative Timothy K. Moore
Co-Chair

Senator Phil Berger, Ex Officio
Senator Dan Blue
Senator Harry Brown
Senator Martin L. Nesbitt, Jr.

Representative Thom Tillis, Ex Officio
Representative John M. Blust
Representative Justin P. Burr
Representative Becky Carney
Representative Mike D. Hager

PREFACE

The Legislative Research Commission, established by Article 6B of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes, is the general purpose study group in the Legislative Branch of State Government. The Commission is co-chaired by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or their designees, and has five additional members appointed from each house of the General Assembly. Among the Commission's duties is that of making or causing to be made, upon the direction of the General Assembly, "such studies of and investigation into governmental agencies and institutions and matters of public policy as will aid the General Assembly in performing its duties in the most efficient and effective manner" (G.S. 120-30.17(1)).

The Legislative Research Commission authorized the study of Common Core State Standards, under authority of G.S. 120-30.17(1). The Committee was chaired by Senator Dan Soucek and Representative Bryan Holloway, Co-Chairs of the Committee. The full membership of the Committee is listed under Committee Membership. A committee notebook containing the committee minutes and all information presented to the committee will be filed in the Legislative Library by the end of the **2013-2014** biennium.

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Legislative Research Commission's Committee on Common Core State Standards met 4 times after the 2013 Regular Session. The Committee's Charge can be found [here](#). Detailed minutes and information from each Committee meeting are available in the Legislative Library.

December 17, 2013

- Committee Charges
Dr. Patsy Pierce, Research Division
- Committee Website
Dee Atkinson, Research Division
- North Carolina General Statutes: "Standards," "Curriculum," and "Common Core"
Dr. Patsy Pierce, Research Division
- The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and in Mathematics: A National Perspective
Michael Brickman, Policy Director, Fordham Institute
- The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and in Mathematics: A State Perspective
Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction
Bill Cobey, Chairman, State Board of Education
Dr. Rebecca Garland, Deputy State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction

February 20, 2014

- Perspectives on the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and in Mathematics
The Honorable Dan Forest, Lieutenant Governor
- Answers to Questions About the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and in Mathematics
Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction
- Common Core State Standards: The Way Forward
Dr. Terry Stoops, Education Policy Analyst, John Locke Foundation
- Local Perspectives on the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and in Mathematics
Instructional Staff
Chad Beasley, Middle/High Curriculum Director, Stokes County Schools
Erin Doyle, Instructional Coach, Oak Hill Elementary School, Guilford County Schools
Robin Layman, Principal, Pinnacle Elementary School, Stokes County Schools
Timothy Barnsback, Project Lead the Way Instructor, Burke County Schools

Tammy Beach, 6th Grade Math Teacher, Gamewell Middle School, Caldwell County Schools

Administrative Staff

Dr. Ed Croom, Superintendent, Johnston County Schools

Kevin Spainhour, Principal, West Stokes High School, Stokes County Schools

Anna Maria Romero-Lehrer, Principal, South Topsail Elementary School,
Pender County Schools

Muriel Summers, Principal, AB Combs Elementary School, Wake County
Schools

March 20, 2014

- Brief Remarks from Advocacy Groups
Bob Luebke, NC Civitas
Gary Salamido, NC Chamber of Commerce
- Public Hearing on the Common Core State Standards
Public Statements

April 24, 2014

- Presentation of the Final Report
Research Staff
- Committee Review and Consideration of Approval of Final Report

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

This section of the report provides a brief summary of the Committee meetings. It is not intended to be a complete, official record of those meetings. However, there is an official record of the Committee's meetings, including minutes and handouts distributed to the Committee members, in the Legislative Library.

December 17, 2013

Dr. Patsy Pierce from the Research Division outlined the committee's responsibilities. She then briefed the committee on the difference between "standards" and "curriculum," and pointed to existing NC statutes regarding each. Dr. Pierce indicated that the General Assembly, through legislation, has given the State Board of Education authority to adopt standards on what students should learn in our public schools. Curricular choices on how to teach these standards are made at the local level.

Michael Brickman with the Fordham Institute stated that the Common Core is part of an ongoing educational reform effort in the US. He mentioned that traditionally low standards in most states, including NC, has led to increasing need for remedial education in community colleges and in universities and a large work skills gap in our nation's recent high school graduates. These problems led to the efforts of the National Governors' Association and Council of Chief State School Officers to look at high standards from around the nation and compile these standards to form the Common Core State Standards. Mr. Brickman believes that there will be costs savings from implementing the Common Core because of large scale production and purchasing of educational materials by many states. He also cited several ways to improve the Common Core, including enhancing student data security laws and policies. He concluded by saying that adopting different standards at this time in NC would be overly burdensome for teachers, since that would be the third set of standards adopted within less than five years.

State Board of Education Chairman Bill Cobey was the next speaker and indicated that the State Board is continuing to monitor the implementation of the Common Core. Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent, presented next about the State Board's policy to direct the Department of Public Instruction to review state standards every five years. She said that the Board adopted the Common Core in English Language Arts and in Mathematics for those portions of the standard course of study in 2010. She provided several examples of the standards and how they are used in practice. She agreed with Michael Brickman that NC needed higher standards to create a better prepared workforce. Dr. Atkinson also tried to dispel some of the common misconceptions about the Common Core by stating that there is no federal mandate to use these standards, and she assured committee members that student data is protected. She concluded her remarks by outlining the professional development that teachers have received in how to

implement curricula that would support student achievement of the Common Core State Standards.

Dr. Rebecca Garland, Deputy Superintendent, explained that much of the professional development about the Common Core is completed on-line. She concluded her remarks by showing how the standards align to higher education expectations.

The committee had many questions and comments for Dr. Atkinson regarding the Common Core.

February 20, 2014

Lt. Governor Dan Forest opened the meeting by expressing his concerns about the Common Core. He indicated that these standards have not been internationally benchmarked and that in some cases, the standards were too difficult, and in other instances, such as higher level math, the standards are not rigorous enough.

Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent came before the Committee to answer the following questions that had been posed to her by the committee co-chairs:

- Outline the flexibility that North Carolina has for modifying, adding to, or outright removing any of the Common Core standards? What is the process through which NC could make these changes, i.e., is the process initiated by the State Board? What, if any, approval is required? What is the timeline? How will changes be communicated to LEAs?
- Provide evidence for the claim that the Common Core Standards are internationally benchmarked.
- Provide detailed specifics on amount of training provided to teachers on the new Common Core and NC Essential Standards – for Common Core specifically, how many teachers were trained and at what cost? How was training conducted?

Dr. Atkinson stated that the State Board of Education, through its statutory duty to set learning standards for public schools, has total flexibility to change standards, and reminded the committee that they do so every five years, if needed. She provided several documents that included comparisons of the Common Core State Standards with international assessment content areas and question types. She concluded her remarks by providing specific detail on how teachers have been trained in the Common Core and possible curricular choices to help students to meet these standards.

Dr. Terry Stoops from the John Locke Foundation was the next speaker and he provided specific recommendations with regard to the Common Core State Standards in NC, including:

- The NC General Assembly should create two permanent commissions that would be charged with raising the quality and rigor of state English Language Arts and mathematics standards, curricula, and assessments.
- Each commission should employ a large and diverse group of stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, curriculum and content area experts, policy professionals, practitioners, parents, community leaders, school board members, State education officials, and state legislators.
- The goals of the commission would include (i) modifying or replacing the Common Core State Standards, (ii) specifying content that aligns with the standards, (iii) recommending a valid, reliable, and cost-effective testing program that aligns to the standards and content, and (iv) providing ongoing review of the standards, curriculum, and tests throughout implementation.

The committee meeting continued with testimony from teachers, instructional coaches, and school administrators. Their main message was that higher standards are good, but that they need appropriate curricular materials and additional training to feel confident that they are helping all students to reach the higher standards.

The committee meeting concluded with additional questions and discussion by the members.

March 20, 2014

Bob Luebke from the Civitas Institute presented the key reasons why he and many NC citizens are opposed to the Common Core. He said opposition to the standards is rooted in the many philosophical and practical questions which emerge from the Common Core Standards and their implementation. He outlined how the standards lack a sound basis in research and testing, continue to generate questions regarding quality, make false assumptions about a link between academic achievement and economic competitiveness, and consistently violate the principles of federalism. Mr. Luebke reported that he has talked extensively with two individuals (Dr. Sandra Stotsky and Dr. James Milgram) who worked on the Committee to validate the standards and who believe the standards lack rigor and depth.

Gary Salamido from the NC Chamber of Commerce spoke in favor of the Common Core. He said that the business community feels the need for higher academic achievement among the workforce. He mentioned the high remediation rate among NC college students and thought the implementation of the standards would reduce this rate, and increase the academic preparedness of NC's workforce.

The committee then heard public testimony from 60 members of the public, half of whom had signed up to speak online prior to the meeting, and the other half signing up to speak on the morning of the meeting. The public expressed various reasons to either continue or end implementation of the Common Core.

April 24, 2014

The Committee engaged in considerable discussion about the proposed legislation accompanying the final report. The Committee voted to approve two amendments to the proposed legislation. The Committee voted to accept the final report, including the proposed legislation as amended.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on information presented to the Legislative Research Commission Study Committee on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) during its regularly scheduled meetings, the Committee finds that there continue to be many unanswered questions about the CCSS, including but not limited to:

- Do the standards reflect North Carolina's priorities for rigorous preparation in mathematics and in English Language Arts for all of our State's public school students?
- Are the standards developmentally, culturally, and age appropriate for every public school student in North Carolina?
- Are teachers and administrators adequately prepared, and are appropriate curricular resources available, to support every student's attainment of rigorous standards in mathematics and in English Language Arts?

In response to these ongoing questions and concerns, the Committee makes the following recommendations to the 2014 General Assembly:

1. Local boards of education, school administrators, teachers, and instructional personnel should continue to adopt and implement locally adopted curricula for appropriate instruction of each child in each subject area.
2. The State Board of Education (SBE) and local boards of education shall continue to communicate with parents of public school students and other stakeholder groups to increase the transparency of standard and curricular adoption, revisions, implementation and evaluation.
3. The SBE continue to review, revise, and refine the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, especially in the areas of mathematics and in English Language Arts, according to current SBE policy.
4. To assist the SBE in implementing Recommendation 3, the North Carolina General Assembly establishes the Academic Standards Review Commission composed of public and legislative members. **See the attached legislation, 2013-TLza-24, establishing this Commission.**
5. The SBE and local boards of education shall continue to assess teachers' needs for professional development and provide adequate and appropriate professional development that will support teachers to help every student in North Carolina's public schools to achieve the State-determined standard course of study.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

2013-2014

Senate Members:

Senator Dan Soucek, Co-Chair

Senator Chad Barefoot

Senator Warren Daniel

Senator Martin Nesbitt

Senator E. Newton

Senator Earline Parmon

Senator Jerry Tillman

Senator Thomas Apodaca, Ex Officio

House of Representatives Members:

Representative Bryan Holloway, Co-Chair

Representative Marcus Brandon

Representative Tricia Cotham

Representative Jeffrey Elmore

Representative D. Craig Horn

Representative Larry Pittman

Representative Michael Speciale

Representative Timothy Moore, Ex Officio

COMMITTEE CHARGE

Common Core State Standards- The LRC Study Committee on Common Core State Standards shall comprehensively study both current and suggested curriculum standards in K-12 education in the State. The study may include the efficacy of the Common Core State Standards ("CCSS") and potential financial, educational, and legal impacts on the State. The Committee shall focus on the questions of cost and benefits of any existing or proposed curriculum standards and whether those standards will directly and positively affect educational outcomes in the State. The Committee may study any other issues pertinent to this study.

In studying the costs and benefits of existing and proposed curriculum standards, the committee shall examine:

- (1) CCSS adoption in the State as compared to other states and jurisdictions.
- (2) Public school data collection, dissemination, and access policies employed in the State since the adoption of the CCSS.
- (3) Fiscal, educational or legal consequences of State withdrawal from CCSS and/or the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.
- (4) The proper procedure for the State to modify standards up to the allowable 15%.
- (5) Any other issues pertinent to this study.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTES ARTICLE 6B.

Legislative Research Commission.

§ 120-30.17. Powers and duties.

The Legislative Research Commission has the following powers and duties:

- (1) Pursuant to the direction of the General Assembly or either house thereof, or of the chairmen, to make or cause to be made such studies of and investigations into governmental agencies and institutions and matters of public policy as will aid the General Assembly in performing its duties in the most efficient and effective manner.
- (2) To report to the General Assembly the results of the studies made. The reports may be accompanied by the recommendations of the Commission and bills suggested to effectuate the recommendations.
- (3), (4) Repealed by Session Laws 1969, c. 1184, s. 8.
- (5), (6) Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 688, s. 2.
- (7) To obtain information and data from all State officers, agents, agencies and departments, while in discharge of its duty, pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 120-19 as if it were a committee of the General Assembly.
- (8) To call witnesses and compel testimony relevant to any matter properly before the Commission or any of its committees. The provisions of G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4 shall apply to the proceedings of the Commission and its committees as if each were a joint committee of the General Assembly. In addition to the other signatures required for the issuance of a subpoena under this subsection, the subpoena shall also be signed by the members of the Commission or of its committee who vote for the issuance of the subpoena.
- (9) For studies authorized to be made by the Legislative Research Commission, to request another State agency, board, commission or committee to conduct the study if the Legislative Research Commission determines that the other body is a more appropriate vehicle with which to conduct the study. If the other body agrees, and no legislation specifically provides otherwise, that body shall conduct the study as if the original authorization had assigned the study to that body and shall report to the General Assembly at the same time other studies to be conducted by the Legislative Research Commission are to be reported. The other agency shall conduct the transferred study within the funds already assigned to it.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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BILL DRAFT 2013-TLza-24 [v.7] (04/14)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
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Short Title: Replace Common Core To Meet NC's Needs. (Public)

Sponsors: Unknown (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REPLACE THE COMMON CORE BY EXERCISING NORTH
3 CAROLINA'S PROPER CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY OVER ALL
4 ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND TO ENSURE THAT STANDARDS ARE
5 ROBUST AND APPROPRIATE, AND THAT THEY ENABLE STUDENTS TO
6 SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY, AS RECOMMENDED
7 BY THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION STUDY COMMITTEE ON
8 THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS.
9 Whereas, under the United States Constitution, public education is a power
10 reserved to states; and
11 Whereas, the North Carolina Constitution directs the State Board of
12 Education to supervise and administer the free public school system, subject to laws
13 enacted by the General Assembly; and
14 Whereas, both the North Carolina Constitution and the North Carolina
15 General Statutes recognize that academic standards should be developed and established
16 by the State Board of Education to meet North Carolina's needs; and
17 Whereas, the North Carolina General Statutes direct the State Board of
18 Education to adopt and modify academic standards for the public schools;
19 Whereas, the North Carolina General Statutes also grant local boards of
20 education broad discretion and authority with respect to specific curricular decisions
21 and academic programs, as long as they align with the standards adopted by the State
22 Board of Education; and
23 Whereas, implementation of standards that are not tailored to the needs of
24 North Carolina's students would be costly, inefficient and ineffective; and
25 Whereas, North Carolina's standards must be age-level and developmentally
26 appropriate; and

1 Whereas, the adoption and implementation of demanding, robust academic
2 standards is essential for providing high-quality education to our students and for
3 fostering a competitive economy for the future of our State; now therefore

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.(a)** The State Board of Education shall:

6 (1) Continue to exercise its authority under the North Carolina
7 Constitution and G.S. 115C-12(9c) to adopt, revise, and replace
8 academic standards for the public schools.

9 (2) Conduct a comprehensive review of all English Language Arts and
10 Mathematics standards and propose modifications to ensure that they
11 are rigorous, meet and reflect North Carolina's priorities, are age and
12 developmentally appropriate, and are understandable to parents and
13 teachers. Prior to making changes to the standards, the State Board
14 shall consult with the Academic Standards Review Commission,
15 which is established in Section 2 of this act.

16 **SECTION 1.(b)** Academic standards adopted by the State Board of
17 Education under G.S. 115C-12(9c) shall continue to be named and referred to as the
18 "North Carolina Standard Course of Study", reflecting emphasis on North Carolina's
19 needs and priorities.

20 **SECTION 1.(c)** The State Board shall ensure that the implementation of this
21 Section is consistent with federal law and the conditions of federal grants.

22 **SECTION 2.(a)** There is established the Academic Standards Review
23 Commission. The Commission shall be located administratively in the Department of
24 Administration, but shall exercise all its prescribed statutory powers independently of
25 the Department of Administration.

26 **SECTION 2.(b)** The Commission shall be composed of 17 members as
27 follows:

- 28 (1) The Lieutenant Governor or a designee.
29 (2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or a designee.
30 (3) Six members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, of
31 whom no more than one may be a member of the Senate. The
32 President Pro Tempore shall consider, but is not limited to appointing
33 representatives from the following groups in these appointments:
34 parents of students enrolled in the public schools; Mathematics and
35 English Language Arts teachers; and Mathematics and English
36 Language Arts curriculum experts.
37 (4) Six members appointed by the Speaker of the House of
38 Representatives, of whom no more than one may be a member of the
39 House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House of
40 Representatives shall consider, but is not limited to appointing
41 representatives from the following groups in these appointments:
42 parents of students enrolled in the public schools; Mathematics and
43 English Language Arts teachers; and Mathematics and English
44 Language Arts curriculum experts.
45 (5) Two members of the State Board of Education appointed by the chair
46 of the State Board of Education.

1 (6) One member appointed by the Governor.

2 The Senator and Representative appointed to the Commission shall serve as
3 Co-chairs of the Commission.

4 **SECTION 2.(c)** The Commission shall:

5 (1) Conduct a comprehensive review of the academic standards for
6 English Language Arts and Mathematics that were adopted by the
7 State Board of Education under G.S. 115C-12(9c).

8 (2) As soon as practicable upon convening, and at any time prior to
9 termination, recommend changes and modifications to these academic
10 standards to the State Board of Education.

11 (3) Review the proposed changes to academic standards submitted to it by
12 the State Board of Education in accordance with subdivision (2) of
13 Section 1 of this act.

14 (4) Recommend to the State Board of Education, assessments aligned to
15 proposed changes and modification that would also reduce the number
16 of assessments administered to public schools.

17 (5) Consider the impact on educators, including the need for professional
18 development, when making any of the recommendations required in
19 this Section.

20 The Commission shall assemble content experts to assist in evaluating the
21 rigor of academic standards. The Commission shall also involve interested stakeholders
22 in this process and otherwise ensure that the process is transparent.

23 **SECTION 2.(d)** The Commission shall meet upon the call of the co-chairs.

24 A quorum of the Commission shall be 9 members. Any vacancy on the Commission
25 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

26 The Commission shall hold its first meeting no later than September 1, 2014.

27 **SECTION 2.(e)** The Commission may contract for professional, clerical,
28 and consultant services. The Commission may also contract with an individual who has
29 an excellent national reputation in the area of school standards and assessments to
30 facilitate the work of the Commission. Professional and clerical staff positions for the
31 Commission may be filled by persons whose services are loaned to the Commission to
32 fulfill the work of the Commission.

33 **SECTION 2.(f)** The Department of Administration shall provide meeting
34 rooms, telephones, office space, equipment, and supplies to the Commission and shall
35 be reimbursed from the Commission's budget.

36 **SECTION 2.(g)** Commission members shall receive per diem, subsistence,
37 and travel allowances in accordance with G.S. 138-5, 138-6, or 120-3.1, as appropriate.

38 **SECTION 2.(h)** Upon the request of the Commission, all State departments
39 and agencies and local government and their subdivisions shall furnish the Commission
40 with any information in their possession or available to them.

41 **SECTION 2.(i)** The Commission shall make a final report of its findings and
42 recommendations to the State Board of Education, the Joint Legislative Education
43 Oversight Committee and the 2016 Session of the 2015 General Assembly. The
44 Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2015, or upon the filing of its final report,
45 whichever occurs first.

46 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-174.11(c)(3) is repealed.

1 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 115C-12(39) reads as rewritten:

2 "(39) Power to Accredite Schools. – Upon the request of a local board of
3 education, the State Board of Education shall evaluate schools in local
4 school administrative units to determine whether the education
5 provided by those schools meets acceptable levels of quality. The State
6 Board shall adopt rigorous academic standards for accreditation after
7 consideration of (i) the standards of regional and national accrediting
8 agencies, (ii) ~~the Common Core Standards adopted by the National~~
9 ~~Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of~~
10 ~~Chief State School Officers,~~ the academic standards adopted in
11 accordance with subdivision (9c.) of this Section, and (iii) other
12 information it deems appropriate.

13 The local school administrative unit shall compensate the State
14 Board for the actual costs of the accreditation process."

15 **SECTION 5.** The State Board of Education shall report to the Joint
16 Legislative Education Oversight Committee prior to the acquisition and implementation
17 of a new assessment instrument to assess student achievement on the academic
18 standards adopted pursuant to G.S. 115C-12(9c), including the Common Core Smarter
19 Balanced Consortium Assessments and the PARCC Assessment developed by the
20 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers. The State Board shall
21 not acquire or implement such an assessment instrument without the enactment of
22 legislation by the General Assembly authorizing the purchase.

23 **SECTION 6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
24 Department of Administration the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000)
25 for the 2014-2015 fiscal year to implement Section 2 of this act.

26 **SECTION 7.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2014.
27

