

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 19

Short Title: No Social Promotions Permitted.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Perdue; Albertson, Cooper, Hoyle, Kerr, Warren, and Wellons.

Referred to: Education/Higher Education.

February 3, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THAT STUDENTS MASTER THE BASICS AT ONE GRADE
2 LEVEL BEFORE THEY ARE PROMOTED TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL.
3

Whereas, some students in North Carolina receive social promotions; that is, they are promoted to the next grade level before they master the basics at their grade level; and
Whereas, a student who has not mastered the basics at one grade level is unlikely to succeed at the next grade level; and

Whereas, it is imperative that the promotion standards we set for our students are high enough to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful as citizens and in the workplace; and

Whereas, it is imperative that the promotion standards we set for our students are high enough to ensure that a high school diploma means that a student has the skills and knowledge we should expect of a high school graduate; and

Whereas, it is imperative that every North Carolina school identify students who are lagging behind these high standards and help them meet these standards along with their age-level peers; Now, therefore,

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 Section 1. G.S. 115C-174.11 reads as rewritten:

6 "§ 115C-174.11. Components of the testing program.

1 (a) Assessment Instruments for ~~First~~ Kindergarten, First, and Second Grades. –
2 The State Board of Education shall adopt and provide to the local school administrative
3 units developmentally appropriate individualized assessment instruments in reading,
4 writing, and mathematics consistent with the Basic Education Program for the ~~first~~
5 kindergarten, first, and second grades, rather than standardized tests. These instruments
6 shall be used to assist teachers in determining student progress and improving classroom
7 instruction.

8 Local school administrative units ~~may~~ shall use these assessment instruments provided
9 to them by the State Board for first and second grade students, and shall not use
10 standardized tests.

11 (a1) Student Performance Benchmarks for Grades Four and Eight.

12 (1) The State Board of Education shall establish individual student
13 performance benchmarks in reading, writing, and mathematics for
14 students in grades four and eight. These benchmarks shall be consistent
15 with the grade-level student performance expectations outlined in the
16 ABC's Plan, the standard course of study, and the recommendations of
17 the North Carolina Education Standards and Accountability
18 Commission and with the benchmarks established for grades four and
19 eight by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The
20 benchmarks shall include State test scores, a standardized student
21 performance checklist, and other information the State Board of
22 Education deems appropriate.

23 (2) Students who do not successfully pass the student performance
24 benchmarks at grades four and eight shall not be promoted. Local
25 boards of education shall provide these students with intensive,
26 accelerated instructional support to assist them in meeting the
27 benchmarks for their grade level.

28 (3) The State Board of Education shall develop appropriate rules and
29 guidelines for providing technical assistance to local school
30 administrative units to ensure compliance with this subsection. These
31 rules and guidelines shall:

32 a. Identify for local boards of education the existing State and
33 federal funds they can use to identify students who may not pass
34 the student performance benchmarks and to provide services to
35 students who may not or have not passed the benchmarks;

36 b. Identify options for incorporating strategies for implementing
37 this subsection into the local school improvement plans; and

38 c. Advise local boards of education to commit the resources
39 necessary to comply with this subsection.

40 (b) Competency Testing Program.

41 (1) The State Board of Education shall adopt tests or other measurement
42 devices which may be used to assure that graduates of the public high
43 schools and graduates of nonpublic schools supervised by the State

1 Board of Education pursuant to the provisions of Part 1 of Article 39 of
2 this Chapter possess the skills and knowledge necessary to function
3 independently and successfully in assuming the responsibilities of
4 citizenship.

5 (2) The tests shall be administered annually to all tenth grade students in the
6 public schools. Students who fail to attain the required minimum
7 standard for graduation in the tenth grade shall be given remedial
8 instruction and additional opportunities to take the test up to and
9 including the last month of the twelfth grade. Students who fail to pass
10 parts of the test shall be retested on only those parts they fail. Students
11 in the tenth grade who are enrolled in special education programs or
12 who have been officially designated as eligible for participation in such
13 programs may be excluded from the testing programs.

14 (3) The State Board of Education may develop and validate alternate means
15 and standards for demonstrating minimum competence. These
16 standards, which must be more difficult than the tests adopted pursuant
17 to subdivision (1) of this subsection, may be passed by students in lieu
18 of the testing requirement of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

19 (4) Repealed by Session Laws 1996, Second Extra Session, c. 18, s. 18.14.

20 (c) Annual Testing Program.

21 (1) The State Board of Education shall adopt a system of annual testing for
22 grades three through 12. These tests shall be designed to measure
23 progress toward reading, communication skills, and mathematics for
24 grades three through eight, and toward competencies designated by the
25 State Board for grades nine through 12.

26 (2) If the State Board of Education finds that additional testing in grades
27 three through 12 is desirable to allow comparisons with national
28 indicators of student achievement, that testing shall be conducted with
29 the smallest size sample of students necessary to assure valid
30 comparisons with other states."

31 Section 2. Prior to June 1, 1998, the State Board of Education shall:

32 (1) Establish student performance benchmarks for grades four and eight in
33 accordance with G.S. 115C-174.11(a1), as enacted in Section 1 of this
34 act;

35 (2) Conduct research on and develop information on the best methods for
36 providing accelerated learning for students that are at risk of not
37 passing the fourth and eighth grade benchmarks and provide this
38 information to local school administrative units;

39 (3) Identify current resources available and additional resources necessary
40 to implement these best methods; and

41 (4) Develop a comprehensive plan to assist local school administrative units
42 in providing appropriate educational opportunities for students that are
43 at risk of not passing the fourth and eighth grade benchmarks.

1 Section 3. This act is effective when it becomes law. Section 1 of this act
2 applies to all school years beginning with the 1998-99 school year.