March 21, 2007

**S 1322. TRUTH IN EDUCATION ACT.** Filed 3/21/07. *TO ENACT THE TRUTH IN EDUCATION ACT*.

To be summarized in tomorrow's *Daily Bulletin.*

**Intro. Berger of Rockingham.** GS 115C

March 22, 2007

**S 1322. TRUTH IN EDUCATION ACT.** Filed 3/21/07. *TO ENACT THE TRUTH IN EDUCATION ACT*.

*Calculation of the state dropout rate.* Amends GS 115C-12 to specify that data is to be collected from every public and charter school in the state and reported so that it can be measured against previous years (was, in a disaggregated manner). Directs the State Board of Education (SBE) to maintain the data and to make it readily available to the public. Specifies how the state dropout rate is to be calculated.

*Standards to be measurable.* Under current law, the SBE has the power to develop content standards and exit standards and is charged with making those standards developed in the core academic areas measurable. The act amends GS 115C-12(9c) to direct the SBE to make those standards measurable by nationally standardized tests whenever possible. Makes conforming changes to GS 115C-81(g) requiring the use of nationally standardized tests where available. Amends GS 115C-105.35(a) to require that the statewide accountability system, which sets annual performance standards for each school to measure growth in student performance, change the performance standards to be based on nationally standardized tests. Currently, the performance standards are based on the statewide testing program known as the ABCs.

*Purposes of the statewide testing program.* Amends GS 115C-174.10 to add as a fourth purpose of the Statewide Testing Program, to facilitate comparison of North Carolina student performance to national student performance. Current law lists three purposes, (1) to assure that all high school graduates have the minimum skills and knowledge to function as a member of society; (2) to provide a means for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery; and (3) to establish additional means for making the education system accountable to the public. Directs that except as otherwise require under federal or North Carolina law, all state tests are to be nationally standardized.

*Components of the testing program.* Amends 115C-174.11 to require that the SBE adopt nationally standardized tests for (1) the competency testing program, and (2) the annual testing program measuring academic progress for grades three through eight (end-of-grade tests), and academic progress toward competencies designated by the SBE for grades nine through 12. Additionally specifies that the end-of-grade and end-of-course tests adopted for grades three through twelve be nationally normed achievement tests developed by a testing company. Directs the SBE to develop alternate means for demonstrating minimum competence for students identified under SBE policy as eligible for measurement of competency via one of the alternative means, including students with disabilities who fail to pass the nationally standardized competency tests after two attempts. (Under current law, the SBE may adopt nationally standardized tests or other equivalent measures, or may develop alternate means of testing.)

Establishes an advisory committee to assist the SBE with test selection. Members of the advisory committee include legislators and individuals appointed by legislators. Directs the Legislative Services Office to provide staff to the advisory committee.

Under current law, the SBE is responsible for establishing policies and guidelines to minimize (1) the time students spend taking tests administered via the State and local testing programs, and (2) the frequency of field testing at any one school. The act amends GS 115C-174.12 to eliminate requirements regarding minimizing the frequency of field testing but retains the requirement that schools not spend more than two days of instructional time per year on practice tests. (Field tests are used in the final design of state generated tests. Under the provisions of this act, state generated tests are to be replaced with nationally standardized tests.) Directs the SBE to adopt rules prohibiting schools from using guidance counselors to coordinate or administer testing for more than ten days during the school year. Makes additional conforming changes.

Effective July 1, 2007, and applies beginning with the 2007-08 school year.

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