

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 40

Short Title: High School Dropout Age Pilot/McDowell County. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Dobson.

*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Education - K-12

February 7, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCLUDE MCDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS IN THE PILOT PROGRAM TO  
RAISE THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT AGE FROM SIXTEEN TO EIGHTEEN.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Section 8.21 of S.L. 2016-94 reads as rewritten:

**"PILOT PROGRAM TO RAISE THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT AGE FROM SIXTEEN  
TO EIGHTEEN**

**"SECTION 8.21.(a)** Notwithstanding any provisions in Part 1 of Article 26 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, G.S. 7B-1501(27), 115C-238.66(3), 116-235(b)(2), and 143B-805(20) to the contrary, the State Board of Education shall authorize the Hickory Public Schools, the Newton-Conover City Schools, ~~and the Rutherford County Schools~~ Schools, and the McDowell County Schools to establish and implement a pilot program pursuant to this section to increase the high school dropout age from 16 years of age to the completion of the school year coinciding with the calendar year in which a student reaches 18 years of age, unless the student has previously graduated from high school. The pilot program may be implemented beginning with the 2016-2017 school year for the Hickory Public Schools, Newton-Conover City Schools, and Rutherford County Schools, and beginning with the 2017-2018 school year for the McDowell County Schools, and may continue for subsequent school years following the end of the 2015-2017 fiscal biennium.

...

**"SECTION 8.21.(f)** Each local school administrative unit may use any funds available to it to implement the pilot program in accordance with this section to (i) employ up to three additional teachers and (ii) fund additional student-related costs, such as transportation and technology costs, including additional computers, to serve a greater number of students as a result of the pilot program. Each local school administrative unit may also use any funds available to it to operate a night school program for students at risk of dropping out of high school. For Hickory Public Schools and Newton-Conover City Schools, to the extent possible, the local school administrative units shall partner with Catawba Valley Community College in administering the pilot program. For Rutherford County Schools, to the extent possible, the local school administrative unit shall partner with Isothermal Community College in administering the pilot program. For McDowell County Schools, to the extent possible, the local school administrative unit shall partner with McDowell Technical Community College in administering the pilot program.

**"SECTION 8.21.(g)** The local school administrative units, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and the Senate Appropriations Committee on



1 Education/Higher Education by January 15, 2018, and by January 15 of each even-numbered year  
2 thereafter until the end of the operation of the pilot programs. The report shall include at least all  
3 of the following information:

- 4 (1) An analysis of the graduation rate in each local school administrative unit and  
5 the impact of the pilot program on the graduation rate.
- 6 (2) The teen crime statistics for Catawba ~~County and~~County, for Rutherford  
7 ~~County-County, and for McDowell County.~~
- 8 (3) The number of reported cases of violations of compulsory attendance laws in  
9 Catawba ~~County and~~County, Rutherford ~~County-County, and~~ McDowell  
10 ~~County~~ and the disposition of those cases.
- 11 (4) Implementation of enforcement mechanisms for violations of the compulsory  
12 attendance requirements of the pilot program, including the imposition of  
13 criminal penalties.
- 14 (5) The number of at-risk students served in any night programs established as part  
15 of the pilot program and student graduation and performance outcomes for  
16 those students.
- 17 (6) All relevant data to assist in determining the effectiveness of the program and  
18 specific legislative recommendations, including the continuation, modification,  
19 or expansion of the program statewide.

20 **"SECTION 8.21.(h)** The State Board of Education shall not authorize a pilot program under  
21 subsection (a) of this section in Catawba County except upon receipt of a copy of a joint resolution  
22 adopted by the boards of education for the Hickory Public Schools and the Newton-Conover City  
23 Schools setting forth a date to begin establishment and implementation of the pilot program. The  
24 State Board of Education shall not authorize a pilot program under subsection (a) of this section in  
25 Rutherford County except upon receipt of a copy of a resolution adopted by the board of education  
26 for the Rutherford County Schools setting forth a date to begin establishment and implementation  
27 of the pilot program. The State Board of Education shall not authorize a pilot program under  
28 subsection (a) of this section in McDowell County except upon receipt of a copy of a resolution  
29 adopted by the board of education for the McDowell County Schools setting forth a date to begin  
30 establishment and implementation of the pilot program."

31 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.