

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 521

Short Title: School Calendar Flex./Union County. (Local)

Sponsors: Representatives Arp, Brody, and Horn (Primary Sponsors).

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

Referred to: Education - K-12

March 30, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY TO UNION COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS IN ADOPTING THE SCHOOL CALENDAR.

Whereas, the State-mandated, late-August start date combined with the instructional time requirement means that high schools cannot complete the first semester until mid-January, which can negatively impact their preparation and performance; and

Whereas, the State-mandated, late-August start date puts high school calendars out of alignment with community colleges and four-year universities, which typically begin the first semester earlier in August and begin the second semester two or three weeks before high school students complete the fall semester, which creates barriers to enrollment; and

Whereas, the late-August start date and other requirements of the calendar law make it more difficult for school districts to schedule professional development days during the school year; and

Whereas, the Union County Board of Education has recognized the need to provide additional days of instruction to students in school where there is a higher percentage of children in poverty; and

Whereas, local boards of education have powers of supervision and control over local school systems; and

Whereas, allowing the Union County Board of Education to have additional flexibility with setting start and end dates for its school calendar will help alleviate the issues delineated above while giving more authority to that locally elected body, which is statutorily empowered to govern the school system; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-84.2(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) Opening and Closing Dates. – Local boards of education shall determine the dates of opening and closing the public schools under subdivision (a)(1) of this section. Except for year-round schools, the opening date for students shall be no earlier than the ~~Monday closest to August 26,~~ second Tuesday in August, and the closing date for students shall be no later than the ~~Friday closest to June 11.~~ On a showing of good cause, the State Board of Education may waive the requirement that the opening date for students be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and may allow the local board of education to set an opening date no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19, to the extent that school calendars are able to provide sufficient days to accommodate anticipated makeup days due to school closings. second Tuesday in June. A local board may revise the scheduled closing date if necessary in order to comply with the minimum requirements for instructional days or instructional time. ~~For~~



~~1 purposes of this subsection, the term "good cause" means that schools in any local school
2 administrative unit in a county have been closed eight days per year during any four of the last
3 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other
4 emergency situations.~~

5 The required opening and closing dates under this subsection shall not apply to any school
6 that a local board designated as having a modified calendar for the 2003-2004 school year or to
7 any school that was part of a planned program in the 2003-2004 school year for a system of
8 modified calendar schools, so long as the school operates under a modified calendar."

9 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-174.12(a)(4) reads as rewritten:

10 "(4) All annual assessments of student achievement adopted by the State Board
11 of Education pursuant to G.S. 115C-174.11(c)(1) and (3) and all final exams
12 for courses shall be administered within the final 10 instructional days of the
13 school year for year-long courses and within the final five instructional days
14 of the semester for semester courses. Exceptions shall be permitted to
15 accommodate a student's individualized education program and section 504
16 (29 U.S.C. § 794) plans and for the administration of final exams for courses
17 with national or international curricula required to be held at designated
18 times. A local board of education that has implemented a school calendar
19 that concludes the fall semester prior to December 31 shall be permitted to
20 administer assessments prior to the conclusion of that semester."

21 **SECTION 3.** This act applies only to Union County Public Schools.

22 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
23 the 2017-2018 academic year.