

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019**

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**HOUSE BILL 895**

Short Title: Opportunity Gap Task Force. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Blackwell, Brockman, Horn, and Meyer (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Education - K-12, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 22, 2019

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE OPPORTUNITY GAP TASK FORCE.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** There is established the Opportunity Gap Task Force (Task Force).

5 **SECTION 2.** The Task Force shall consist of 13 members as follows:

- 6 (1) Three persons who are members of the House of Representatives at the time  
7 of appointment, at least one of whom represents the minority party, appointed  
8 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.  
9 (2) Three persons who are members of the Senate at the time of appointment, at  
10 least one of whom represents the minority party, appointed by the President  
11 Pro Tempore of the Senate.  
12 (3) The chair of the State Board of Education, or his or her designee.  
13 (4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction, or his or her designee.  
14 (5) The President of The University of North Carolina, or his or her designee.  
15 (6) The President of the North Carolina System of Community Colleges, or his or  
16 her designee.  
17 (7) The President of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities,  
18 Inc., or his or her designee.  
19 (8) The President and Chief Executive Officer of North Carolina Business  
20 Leaders for Education, doing business as BEST NC (Business for Educational  
21 Success and Transformation), or his or her designee.  
22 (9) The Executive Director of NC Child, or his or her designee.  
23 (10) The Senior Education Advisor to the Governor.

24 **SECTION 3.** Appointments to the Task Force shall be made no later than August 1,  
25 2019. In making their appointments, the appointing authorities shall consider the geographic and  
26 cultural diversity of the State and the value to the Task Force of experience in business, education,  
27 and philanthropic organizations. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

28 **SECTION 4.** The Task Force shall (i) study the opportunity gap, (ii) consider  
29 effective approaches and best practices from across the country to close the opportunity gap in  
30 grades kindergarten through 12, and (iii) propose a plan to reduce the opportunity gap for all  
31 subgroups by July 1, 2030. For purposes of this act, the "opportunity gap" refers to the significant  
32 disparity in the academic performance and postsecondary readiness of students between any of  
33 the following subgroups: races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, genders, English-language  
34 proficiencies, and urban, rural, or suburban domiciles.

35 As part of its study, the Task Force shall consider the following:



- 1 (1) Best practices in public education.
- 2 (2) Professional development for teachers.
- 3 (3) Parental involvement in public education.
- 4 (4) Disparities in disciplinary consequences, including suspensions and
- 5 expulsions.
- 6 (5) Preparation and development of school leadership.
- 7 (6) Effective use of data to reduce the opportunity gap.
- 8 (7) Access to effective educators.
- 9 (8) Access to rigorous coursework, including content and courses.
- 10 (9) Access to effective school leadership.
- 11 (10) Innovative budgeting practices.
- 12 (11) The value of incorporating mastery-based learning into curriculum.
- 13 (12) Any other issue the Task Force deems relevant to its study.

14 At a minimum, the Task Force shall extend invitations to receive input from all of the  
15 following:

- 16 (1) Two or more parents of students adversely affected by the opportunity gap.
- 17 (2) Two or more teachers employed in a North Carolina public school who have
- 18 demonstrated significant success in reducing the opportunity gap in the
- 19 classroom.
- 20 (3) Two or more principals employed in a North Carolina public school who have
- 21 demonstrated significant success in reducing the opportunity gap at a school.
- 22 (4) Two or more superintendents employed in a local school administrative unit
- 23 who have demonstrated significant success in reducing the opportunity gap at
- 24 a local school administrative unit.
- 25 (5) Organizations that have demonstrated success in closing the opportunity gap,
- 26 including, but not limited to, Communities in Schools of North Carolina, Inc.
- 27 (6) The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission.
- 28 (7) The My Future NC Commission.
- 29 (8) The Governor's Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education.
- 30 (9) The B-3 Interagency Council.
- 31 (10) The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, Inc.'s Pathways to
- 32 Grade-Level Reading Initiative.

33 The Task Force shall include the following in its proposed plan to reduce the  
34 opportunity gap for all subgroups:

- 35 (1) Information identifying opportunity gaps that exist between races, ethnicities,
- 36 socioeconomic statuses, genders, English-language proficiencies, and urban,
- 37 rural, or suburban domiciles.
- 38 (2) Recommendations for closing or significantly reducing the opportunity gaps
- 39 identified by the Task Force.
- 40 (3) Benchmarks for implementation of the proposed plan.

41 **SECTION 5.** The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro  
42 Tempore of the Senate shall each select a cochair for the Task Force from among its members.  
43 The Task Force shall meet upon the call of its cochairs. A quorum of the Task Force is a majority  
44 of its members. No action may be taken except by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum  
45 is present. The Task Force, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers  
46 provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Task Force may  
47 contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services, as provided by G.S. 120-32.02. If the  
48 Task Force hires a consultant, the consultant shall not be a State employee or a person currently  
49 under contract with the State to provide services.

50 Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation, but may receive travel  
51 and subsistence as follows:

- 1           (1)   Members who are officials or employees of a State agency or unit of local  
2           government, in accordance with G.S. 138-6.  
3           (2)   Members who serve in the General Assembly, in accordance with  
4           G.S. 120-3.1.  
5           (3)   All other members at the rate established in G.S. 138-5.

6           All State departments and agencies and local governments and their subdivisions shall  
7 furnish the Task Force with any requested information in their possession or available to them.

8           **SECTION 6.** The Legislative Services Officer shall assign professional and clerical  
9 staff to assist the Task Force in its work. The Director of Legislative Assistants of the House of  
10 Representatives and the Director of Legislative Assistants of the Senate shall assign clerical  
11 support to the Task Force.

12           **SECTION 7.** Meetings of the Task Force shall begin no later than September 1,  
13 2019. The Task Force shall submit a final report on the results of its study, including its proposed  
14 plan and any proposed legislation, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on or  
15 before September 1, 2020, by filing a copy of the report with the Office of the President Pro  
16 Tempore of the Senate, the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Joint  
17 Legislative Education Oversight Committee, and the Legislative Library. The Task Force shall  
18 terminate on September 1, 2020, or upon the filing of its final report, whichever comes first.

19           **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.