



Whereas, it is in the best interest of the North Carolina citizenry that a coordinated strategy be developed for implementing measures designed to yield substantial improvements in the educational achievement of minority and at-risk students; and

Whereas, a commission is required to effectively research, review, and make recommendations to improve achievement of minority and at-risk students; Now, therefore,

1 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

2 Section 1. (a) The Commission on Improving the Academic Achievement of  
3 Minority And At-Risk Students is created. The Commission shall consist of 16 members,  
4 as follows:

- 5 (1) Five Senators and three public members appointed by the President Pro  
6 Tempore of the Senate;
- 7 (2) Five Representatives and three public members appointed by the  
8 Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
- 9 (3) Six public members appointed by the Governor, who represent groups  
10 or individuals with knowledge and experience in advocating, educating,  
11 or assisting minority and at-risk students achieve, at least one of whom  
12 is a representative of a nonprofit organization that advocates on behalf  
13 of minority and at-risk students.

14 In making appointments to the Commission, the appointing officers shall ensure that  
15 African-American members have significant representation on the Commission.

16 (b) Initial appointments to the Commission shall be made before September 15,  
17 1997. The first meeting of the Commission shall be held no later than October 13, 1997.

18 Section 2. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall designate one  
19 Senator as cochair and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate one  
20 Representative as cochair.

21 Section 3. The Commission shall be authorized to:

- 22 (1) Gather accurate and reliable data and research information pertaining to  
23 the status of minority and at-risk students in the North Carolina public  
24 education system;
- 25 (2) Identify and visit education programs and other efforts within and  
26 outside North Carolina that appear to be successful yielding significant  
27 positive results for minority and at-risk students;
- 28 (3) Consult with higher education faculty members and other persons who  
29 have been engaged in extensive research and observation related to  
30 these issues, and encourage their direct involvement in the activities of  
31 the Commission;
- 32 (4) Conduct hearings throughout the State for the purpose of obtaining  
33 meaningful information regarding successful education programs and  
34 efforts related to these concerns;
- 35 (5) Identify, consult, and meet with representatives of national, regional,  
36 and State-level organizations and agencies that could be particularly  
37 helpful in addressing these concerns;

- 1           (6)    Devise recommendations as to steps that should be taken to address  
2           these concerns – steps to be taken separately and collectively by:  
3           a.     State government;  
4           b.     Local government;  
5           c.     Public schools and higher education institutions;  
6           d.     Nonprofit organizations, including community-based  
7           organizations, with a particular emphasis on those with direct ties  
8           to families of these children and youth;  
9           e.     Foundations;  
10          f.     Religious institutes;  
11          g.     Civic organizations;  
12          h.     Business and industry; and  
13          i.     Other entities; and

- 14          (7)    Determine the extent and categories of fiscal and human resources  
15          needed to address the identified concerns.

16          Section 4. In the study, particular emphasis should be placed on programs and  
17          efforts that have been successful in imparting:

- 18          (1)    Improved educational achievement;  
19          (2)    Reduction of school discipline and behavioral problems;  
20          (3)    Reduction of minority and at-risk student dropout rates; and  
21          (4)    Improved relations between parents, schools, and students.

22          Section 5. The Commission shall make an interim report of its findings and  
23          recommendations to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the  
24          House of Representatives on or before the first day of the 1998 Regular Session of the  
25          1997 General Assembly. The Commission shall submit a final report of its findings and  
26          recommendations to the General Assembly on or before the first day of the 1999 Session  
27          by filing the report with the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the  
28          House of Representatives. Upon filing its final report, the Commission shall terminate.

29          Section 6. The Commission, while in the discharge of official duties, may  
30          exercise all the powers provided under the provisions of G.S. 120-19, and G.S. 120-19.1  
31          through G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the  
32          Legislative Office Building.

33          Section 7. Members of the Commission shall receive subsistence and travel  
34          expenses at the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1.

35          Section 8. The Commission may contract for professional, clerical, or  
36          consultant services as provided by G.S. 120-32.02. The Legislative Administrative  
37          Officer shall assign professional staff to assist in the work of the Commission. The  
38          House of Representatives' and the Senate's Supervisors of Clerks shall assign clerical  
39          staff to the Commission, upon the direction of the Legislative Services Commission. The  
40          expenses relating to the employees shall be borne by the Commission.

41          Section 9. When a vacancy occurs in the membership of the Commission, the  
42          vacancy shall be filled by the same appointing officer who made the initial appointment.

1           Section 10. All State departments and agencies and local governments and  
2 their subdivisions shall furnish the Commission with information in their possession or  
3 available to them.

4           Section 11. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the General  
5 Assembly the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for the 1997-98 fiscal  
6 year and the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for the 1998-99 fiscal year  
7 for the expenses of the Commission.

8           Section 12. This act becomes effective July 1, 1997.