

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001

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HOUSE BILL 1322

Short Title: Making Children the Highest Priority in Schools. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Jeffus; Wainwright, Warner, Adams, and Luebke.

Referred to: Education.

April 12, 2001

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO MAKE CHILDREN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-105.37A. Priority schools.

(a) Purpose of Identifying Priority Schools. – The purpose of identifying priority schools is to ensure that students and schools that are at a high risk of failure receive additional support and resources to develop students' skills and to intervene appropriately in the school.

(b) Identification of Priority Schools. – The State Board of Education shall identify priority schools by October 10 of each year and shall notify the appropriate superintendent of that identification by October 15 of that year. A priority school is a school at which fifty-five percent (55%) or more of the students perform below grade level for two consecutive years.

(c) Assignment of a Principal to the School. – By November 1, a local assessment team composed of the superintendent or a designee, the human resources director, and the curriculum and instruction coordinator, shall assess the current principal at each priority school located in the local school administrative unit. The assessment may include a portfolio assessment, as well as interviews with community members and school staff. If the local assessment team recommends the transfer or reassignment of the principal, the local board of education shall act on that recommendation by November 15. The principal assigned to the school shall have at least three years of demonstrated ability as an administrator, preferably at the building level.

1 (d) Development and Approval of a School Staffing Plan. – The principal
2 assigned to the school shall immediately develop a plan to establish high quality staffing
3 standards for the school. These standards shall provide, at a minimum, that:

- 4 (1) All teachers at the school shall teach in the area in which they are
5 qualified to teach;
6 (2) As far as possible, no more than ten percent (10%) of the teachers shall
7 be initially licensed;
8 (3) No licensed staff shall lose employment or be demoted due to the
9 necessity of being transferred from the priority school to another
10 school within the local school administrative unit; and
11 (4) Current licensed staff shall be given first opportunity to remain at the
12 school.

13 During January, the State Board of Education shall review the plan and either approve
14 or disapprove the school's staffing plan. If the plan is not approved, the school principal
15 and the local assessment team shall revise the plan and submit it to the Board by its
16 February meeting.

17 (e) Implementation of the Priority School Program. – Implementation of the
18 priority school program, including staffing of the school, shall begin with the next
19 school year. Components of the Program shall include:

- 20 (1) Investments in the education program. – In order to ensure that
21 adequate resources are available for a priority school, the per pupil
22 funding allotment for a priority school shall be two hundred percent
23 (200%) of the State's funding for a school that is not a priority school.

24 The additional funds shall be used to reduce class size in academic
25 classes to no more than 17 students and to make investments in
26 educators in accordance with subdivision (2) of this subsection.

27 The additional funds may also be used for other resources such as
28 books and other materials for the media center, full-time school nurses,
29 guidance counselors at the rate of one to 250 students, social workers,
30 psychologists, community coordinators, reading specialists,
31 instructional resource teachers, clerical and instructional assistants,
32 workshops for parents and community members, technology,
33 improvements to infrastructure, and additional days of employment for
34 teachers to plan and collaborate with other staff members or to work in
35 bridge or transition programs. The elected school improvement team
36 shall determine which of these resources best fit the needs of the
37 school;

- 38 (2) Investments in educators. – Experienced licensed staff members who
39 are employed at a priority school shall be required to sign a four-year
40 commitment to teach in the school. Each licensed staff member at the
41 school shall be awarded a five thousand dollar (\$5,000) supplement at
42 the end of each of the first three years of their employment in a priority
43 school. Each licensed staff member who completes the four-year
44 commitment shall be awarded a ten thousand dollar (\$10,000)

1 supplement at the end of the fourth year. A licensed staff member may
2 elect to receive a supplement as a cash bonus or have the money tax
3 deferred into a qualified savings plan, such as a 401K. Licensed staff
4 members who are employed for partial years shall receive a pro rata
5 portion of the supplement for that year, unless they are dismissed for
6 just cause.

7 (3) Modifications to the school program. – The school program shall be
8 modified, if necessary, to include the following:

9 a. The school improvement plan shall include a component for
10 community outreach and involvement.

11 b. The elected school improvement team and the principal shall
12 collaboratively design focused in-service training for the
13 school.

14 c. All teachers shall have at least an hour of planning time during
15 the instructional day to collaborate and plan, as well as a duty-
16 free lunch period.

17 d. The elected school improvement team and principal shall
18 collaboratively develop a school calendar focusing on student
19 progress and community outreach.

20 e. The elected school improvement team and principal may
21 propose modifications to the school calendar to the local board
22 of education. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the
23 local board of education may adopt and implement any such
24 changes that the board finds are necessary to achieve the goals
25 of the school program. These modifications to the school
26 calendar may include, but are not limited to, the following:

27 1. Flexible time for alternative calendars (1000 hours or
28 180 days).

29 2. Flexible schedules to accommodate students with
30 different learning styles.

31 3. Flexible scheduling to provide time for bridge and
32 transition programs.

33 4. Flexible schedules to encourage and ensure parental
34 involvement.

35 5. Flexible testing schedules to accommodate students with
36 different learning styles.

37 6. Flexible time for educators to receive training on
38 analyzing and developing data-driven strategies.

39 f. The school shall develop a strong curriculum with clearly stated
40 academic standards for all students.

41 g. School staff members shall have high expectations for all
42 students.

43 (f) Actions to Increase Parent and Community Involvement. – The local board of
44 education shall issue a Parent/Community Report Card for each priority school, based

1 on the number of hours volunteered by parents and community members. The goal for
2 each school shall be a number of volunteer hours per month equal to the number of
3 students in the school. If the number of volunteer hours in a month is at least one
4 hundred percent (100%) of the number of students in the school, the school will get an
5 "A" on the report card. If the number of volunteer hours in a month is at least ninety
6 percent (90%) of the number of students in the school, the school will get a "B". If the
7 number of volunteer hours in a month is at least eighty percent (80%) of the number of
8 students in the school, the school will get a "C". It is unacceptable for the number of
9 volunteer hours in a month at a school to be less than eighty percent (80%) of the
10 number of students in the school; therefore, that school shall receive a "F".

11 A school is awarded a volunteer hour for each hour a parent, guardian, or person in
12 the community (i) serves as a tutor during or after school, (ii) attends a workshop at the
13 school on how to become more involved in a child's success (such as helping with
14 homework), (iii) participates in a parent-teacher conference, (iv) attends a parent-
15 teacher organization meeting, (v) chaperones a field trip, or (vi) participates in any other
16 activity approved by the elected school improvement team.

17 Additional actions to increase parental and community involvement may be
18 implemented at the school as recommended by the school improvement team and
19 approved by the staff in the same manner as the school improvement plan.

20 (g) Indicators of Successful Progress for Priority Schools. – Indicators of
21 successful progress for priority schools shall include:

- 22 (1) High student performance as indicated by the ABCs Accountability
23 Program Standards and by teacher-made test and assessments.
- 24 (2) A safe and secure school environment.
- 25 (3) A decrease in dropout rates.
- 26 (4) A decrease in the rate of absenteeism for students and staff.
- 27 (5) High percentages of students on time to school and to classes.
- 28 (6) By the end of the fourth year of the priority school designation, at least
29 eighty percent (80%) of all students in grades K through 6 are reading
30 at grade level.
- 31 (7) Students in middle and high schools, grades 7-12, make at least four
32 years of advancement as indicated by the ABCs Accountability
33 Program Standards.
- 34 (8) A school climate with high staff and student morale.
- 35 (9) Increased parental and community involvement in the school."

36 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2001.