

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017**

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HOUSE BILL 231

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

Sponsors: Representative Willingham.

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

Referred to: Education - K-12

March 2, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY TO MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS IN
2 ADOPTING THE SCHOOL CALENDAR.
3

4 Whereas, State law has usurped local control of school calendars by imposing a
5 one-size-fits-all mandate on when the year can begin and end for traditional public schools; and

6 Whereas, the State-mandated, late-August start date combined with the instructional
7 time requirement means that high schools cannot complete the first semester until mid-January;
8 and

9 Whereas, completing the first semester in mid-January results in high school students
10 having to take first semester exams after winter break, which can negatively impact their
11 preparation and performance; and

12 Whereas, the State-mandated, late-August start date puts high school calendars out of
13 alignment with community colleges and four-year universities, which typically begin the first
14 semester in early August and the second semester weeks before high school students complete the
15 fall semester; and

16 Whereas, superintendents have reported that the calendar misalignment creates barriers
17 for high school students who want to take community college courses and creates challenges for
18 high school students who graduate early; and

19 Whereas, the late-August start date and mid-June end date squeeze local school
20 administrative units, particularly those in mountain counties, that need to schedule makeup days
21 for inclement weather closings, leaving them no recourse but to schedule makeup days on
22 unpopular days like holidays, Saturdays, or spring break days; and

23 Whereas, practices and tryouts for interscholastic sports can start as early as August 1,
24 and many student-athletes are required to be available, while some sports, such as football, have
25 already played games before the school year has started, negatively impacting ticket and booster
26 club revenues; and

27 Whereas, the late-August start date and other requirements of the calendar law make it
28 more difficult for school districts to schedule professional development days during the school
29 year, when it is most beneficial to teachers; and

30 Whereas, the North Carolina General Statutes give the powers of supervision and
31 control of local school systems to local boards of education; and

32 Whereas, allowing local boards of education to have additional flexibility with setting a
33 start date for their school calendar will help alleviate the issues delineated above while giving
34 more authority to the locally elected bodies statutorily empowered to govern their school systems;

35 Now, therefore,



1 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

3 "(d) Opening and Closing Dates. – Local boards of education shall determine the dates of
4 opening and closing the public schools under subdivision (a)(1) of this section. Except for
5 year-round schools, the opening date for students shall be no earlier than the Monday closest to
6 August ~~26,10~~, and the closing date for students shall be no later than the Friday closest to June 11.
7 ~~On a showing of good cause, the State Board of Education may waive the requirement that the~~
8 ~~opening date for students be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and may allow the~~
9 ~~local board of education to set an opening date no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19, to~~
10 ~~the extent that school calendars are able to provide sufficient days to accommodate anticipated~~
11 ~~makeup days due to school closings. A local board may revise the scheduled closing date if~~
12 ~~necessary in order to comply with the minimum requirements for instructional days or~~
13 ~~instructional time. For purposes of this subsection, the term "good cause" means that schools in~~
14 ~~any local school administrative unit in a county have been closed eight days per year during any~~
15 ~~four of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or~~
16 ~~other emergency situations. Regardless of the opening date selected for students, all first semester~~
17 examinations may be given before winter break.

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

22 **SECTION 2.** This act applies only to Martin County Schools.

23 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the
24 2017-2018 school year.