

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 923

Short Title: Social and Emotional Learning Pilot. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Ball, Hardister, Gillespie, and Reives (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

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

May 11, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPLEMENT SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL LEARNING CURRICULUM IN KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS.

Whereas, decades of scientific research show social and emotional learning (SEL) is
highly correlated with significant and sustained academic success and improved behavior; and

Whereas, SEL can have a long-term, positive impact through adulthood, including
decreasing the likelihood of being on a waiting list for or living in public housing, receiving
public assistance, being involved with police before adulthood, and spending time in a detention
facility; and

Whereas, many preschool teachers in North Carolina are trained in evidence-based
practices to support social and emotional learning and student development in this area using the
Preschool Pyramid Model of the Department of Public Instruction; and

Whereas, kindergarten teachers are often not prepared to support the social and
emotional well-being of students; and

Whereas, establishing evidence-based SEL practices in kindergarten will better
prepare teachers and provide alignment and continuity for children when they transition into
kindergarten; and

Whereas, the Department of Public Instruction currently recognizes 37 local school
administrative units with at least 135 practitioner coaches and 365 teachers using the Preschool
Pyramid Model, which is only thirty-two percent (32%) of local school administrative units and
seventeen percent (17%) of preschools operated by local school administrative units; Now,
therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Pilot Program; Purpose. – The Department of Public Instruction shall
establish the Kindergarten Social and Emotional Learning Pilot Program (Program) for the
2021-2023 fiscal biennium. The purpose of the Program is to support and promote the expansion
of the existing social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum from the NC Preschool Pyramid
Model used in preschool classrooms into kindergarten classrooms.

SECTION 2. Definitions. – The following definitions shall apply in this act:

(1) Administrator. – A principal or assistant principal.

(2) Coach. – An employee of a local school administrative unit who receives
Preschool Pyramid Model training and support from the Department of Public
Instruction. Coaches will be tasked with supporting teachers and
administrators participating in the Program. Coaches may be peer teachers,



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- 1 preschool coordinators, instructional facilitators, exceptional children staff
2 members, or other similar employees of the local school administrative unit.
- 3 (3) District Implementation Leadership Team (DILT). – A team composed of
4 persons outlined in the Preschool Pyramid Model from within each local
5 school administrative unit that participates in the Program. The DILT is tasked
6 with implementing the Preschool Pyramid Model in the local school
7 administrative unit. The DILT shall fulfill all responsibilities under the
8 Preschool Pyramid Model, as well as responsibilities required by this act.

9 **SECTION 3.** Participation. – The Department of Public Instruction shall develop an
10 application process for the Program by August 1, 2021. Any local school administrative unit that
11 is identified as low performing for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, or 2020-2021 school year may
12 apply to participate in the Program by October 1, 2021. The Department of Public Instruction
13 shall select six local school administrative units that are geographically and culturally diverse to
14 participate in the program by December 1, 2021. Priority shall be given to local school
15 administrative units that receive low-wealth supplemental funding.

16 **SECTION 4.** Implementation. – The Department of Public Instruction shall allocate
17 funds to each local school administrative unit, as necessary, to implement the Program, with at
18 least five thousand dollars (\$5,000) being allocated to each local school administrative unit for
19 classroom materials necessary for the Program. Each local school administrative unit shall
20 implement the Program in six kindergarten classrooms. The Department of Public Instruction
21 shall provide SEL training to six kindergarten teachers, two administrators, and two coaches from
22 each local school administrative unit. Each local school administrative unit shall establish a
23 DILT, pursuant to the Preschool Pyramid Model, to lead the implementation of the Program. The
24 Program shall be implemented as follows:

- 25 (1) Planning and training. – No later than December 31, 2021, the SEL Preschool
26 Pyramid Model shall be adapted for use in kindergarten classrooms by the
27 Department of Public Instruction in consultation with the B-3 Interagency
28 Council. The Department of Public Instruction shall have a method for
29 stakeholder input on the adaptation of the model. Between January 1, 2022,
30 and June 1, 2022, teachers, administrators, and coaches shall be trained by the
31 Department of Public Instruction in cooperation with the DILT in the
32 implementation of the model for use in kindergarten classrooms. The
33 Department of Public Instruction shall have a method for receiving feedback
34 and input from participants in the Program, including teachers, administrators,
35 coaches, and other stakeholders. The curriculum for kindergarten classrooms
36 may be revised based on that feedback and input. On or before July 15, 2022,
37 the Department of Public Instruction shall provide a report to the Joint
38 Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative
39 Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services evaluating the progress
40 of the Program.

- 41 (2) Implementation into classrooms. – For the 2022-2023 school year, each local
42 school administrative unit shall implement the SEL Preschool Pyramid Model
43 in the six kindergarten classrooms. The Department of Public Instruction shall
44 provide professional development to coaches to assist the coaches in
45 supporting teachers and administrators participating in the Program. DILTs
46 shall meet for team training and development and local expansion and
47 sustainability planning. Throughout the process, the Department of Public
48 Instruction shall maintain a method of feedback and input from teachers,
49 administrators, coaches, and other stakeholders from local school
50 administrative units participating in the Program. The Department of Public
51 Instruction shall make any final revisions to the Program before providing a

1 final evaluation report on the Program to the Joint Legislative Education
2 Oversight Committee and Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health
3 and Human Services on or before July 15, 2023. The report shall include at
4 least the following:

- 5 a. Methods for increasing capacity of DILTs within local school
6 administrative units.
- 7 b. Methods for increasing coaches in local school administrative units.
- 8 c. Methods of local expansion and sustainability.
- 9 d. A plan for statewide expansion of the Program.

10 **SECTION 5.** Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
11 Department of Public Instruction the sum of two hundred ninety-two thousand seven hundred
12 fifty-eight dollars (\$292,758) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and the sum of
13 two hundred forty-eight thousand six hundred fifty-seven dollars (\$248,657) in nonrecurring
14 funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year for the implementation of the Program.

15 **SECTION 6.** Effective Date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.