

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023**

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HOUSE BILL 1014

Short Title: Sixth & Ninth Grade Academy Pilot/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Quick.

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

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 6, 2024

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO ESTABLISH A SIXTH AND NINTH GRADE
ACADEMY PILOT PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Establish; Purpose. – The Department of Public Instruction shall establish a Sixth and Ninth Grade Academy Pilot Program for up to 10 local school administrative units to establish sixth and ninth grade academy programs. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide comprehensive support for sixth and ninth grade students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. The pilot program shall be for five years, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year and ending with the 2029-2030 school year.

SECTION 2. Applications. – By September 15, 2024, the Department of Public Instruction shall develop criteria and procedures for a local school administrative unit to apply to participate in the pilot program. A local school administrative unit shall submit an application that includes at least the following information:

- (1) Model design for sixth and ninth grade academy programs, including enhanced instructional and support strategies.
- (2) Estimated cost of establishing sixth and ninth grade academy programs, including additional staff, facilities, and support services.

SECTION 3. Selection. – By December 15, 2024, the Department of Public Instruction shall select up to 10 local school administrative units to participate in the pilot program that represent the geographic diversity of North Carolina, including both urban and rural areas, to the extent possible from the pool of applicants.

SECTION 4. Pilot Evaluation; Reports. – The Department of Public Instruction shall contract with an independent research organization for the duration of the pilot program to evaluate the implementation and success of the sixth and ninth grade academy programs, including at least the following:

- (1) The use of funds by local school administrative units participating in the pilot program.
- (2) Student outcome data, including student proficiency data, change in dropout rates or promotion rates, and attendance.
- (3) A comparison among the program models used by participating local school administrative units and sixth and ninth grade academy program models operated in North Carolina that are not operated as part of the pilot program.
- (4) Other information the Department deems necessary.



1 The independent research organization shall report by August 15 of each year,
2 beginning with the initial report by August 15, 2026, and ending with a final report by August
3 15, 2030, to the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction on all aspects
4 of the evaluation of the pilot program. By October 15 of each year, beginning with the initial
5 report by October 15, 2026, and ending with a final report by October 15, 2030, the Department
6 of Public Instruction shall report on the evaluation of the pilot program, and any legislative
7 recommendations, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

8 **SECTION 5.** State Funds. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
9 Department of Public Instruction the sum of one million four hundred forty-two thousand five
10 hundred sixty dollars (\$1,442,560) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to support
11 implementation of the Sixth and Ninth Grade Academy Pilot Program established by this act.
12 The Department may use up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) of the funds
13 appropriated in this section to contract with an independent research organization for the pilot
14 evaluations. Any remaining funds may be used to award funds to selected local school
15 administrative units for the implementation of the programs in accordance with this act.

16 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2024.