

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 581

Short Title: Career Pathways Transparency Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Winslow, Paré, and Tyson (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

April 1, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENACT THE CAREER PATH OPTIONS TRANSPARENCY ACT.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 116-209.16A reads as rewritten:

"§ 116-209.16A. Information on career and major options.

(a) Know Before You Go. – The Authority shall provide information on a ~~Web site,~~
website, under a section entitled "Know Before You Go," to students and parents to assist in
selection of major and career options in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State, as
provided in this section. The information shall be updated annually.

(a1) Definitions. – The following definitions shall apply in this section:

(1) Private institutions of higher education. – Includes postsecondary institutions
that award postsecondary degrees, as defined in G.S. 116-15(a2)(1).

(2) Prosperity zones of the State. – The eight permanent prosperity zones
identified in G.S. 143B-28.1.

(3) Public institutions of higher education. – Includes the constituent institutions
of The University of North Carolina and the community colleges under the
jurisdiction of the State Board of Community Colleges.

(4) Vocational and technical school. – A school licensed as a proprietary school
under G.S. 115D-90.

(b) Career Options. – The Authority shall, as data is available, provide information on
projected employment needs in the labor ~~economy~~ economy in the State and in each prosperity
zone of the State, including highest demand career areas, and associated salary ranges for those
areas of employment, college majors which may fulfill those needs, and institutions of higher
education that may provide those majors. The Authority may use existing sources of public
information, such as the employment projections produced by the federal Department of Labor,
Bureau of Labor Statistics, to develop this information.

(c) Major Options. – The Authority shall, as data is available, provide information based
on aggregate data for outcomes of public and private institutions of higher education and
vocational and technical schools in North Carolina. Outcome information for each public and
private institution of higher education and vocational and technical school shall include, but is
not limited to, the following:

(1) Completion rates within the expected number of semesters for the degree
sought.

(2) Transfer rates of students to other institutions.



- 1 (2a) Average tuition for public and private institutions of higher education and
2 vocational and technical schools.
3 (3) Percentage of students receiving financial aid, by type of aid.
4 (4) Average and median amount of loan debt upon student graduation, by
5 major, major, and among graduates from four-year institutions of higher
6 education, community colleges, and vocational and technical schools.
7 (4a) Average monthly student loan payment from four-year institutions of higher
8 education, community colleges, and vocational and technical schools.
9 (5) Average and median salary, by major, major, and among graduates from
10 four-year institutions of higher education, community colleges, and vocational
11 and technical schools.
12 (6) Percentage of graduates employed within six months of graduation, by
13 major, major, and among graduates from four-year institutions of higher
14 education, community colleges, and vocational and technical schools.
15 (7) Percentage of graduates enrolled in graduate school within six months of
16 graduation, by major.

17 (d) ~~Public and Private Institutions of Higher Education. — For the purposes of this section,~~
18 ~~"public institutions of higher education" shall include the constituent institutions of The~~
19 ~~University of North Carolina and the community colleges under the jurisdiction of the State~~
20 ~~Board of Community Colleges and "private institutions of higher education" shall include~~
21 ~~postsecondary institutions that award postsecondary degrees, as defined in G.S. 116-15(a2)(1)."~~

22 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

23 "(41a) To Compile Data for the "Know Before You Go" Program. — The State Board
24 and the Department of Public Instruction shall collaborate with the
25 Department of Commerce and the Department of Labor in collecting data for
26 local boards of education to provide to sophomore students to enable them to
27 make informed decisions about postsecondary education choices and their
28 professional futures through the "Know Before You Go" programs under
29 G.S. 115C-47(34b)."

30 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

31 "(34b) To Provide Sophomores with "Know Before You Go" Information. — Each
32 local board of education shall provide for a program for students in their
33 sophomore year of high school with the information contained on the "Know
34 Before You Go" website pursuant to G.S. 116-209.16A and the information
35 compiled by the Department of Public Instruction under G.S. 115C-12(41a)
36 to allow students to make informed decisions about postsecondary education
37 choices and their professional futures."

38 **SECTION 4.** Through the longitudinal data system established pursuant to Chapter
39 116E of the General Statutes, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor, and the
40 Department of Public Instruction shall collect and compile data on an annual basis for the "Know
41 Before You Go" website maintained by the State Education Assistance Authority pursuant to
42 G.S. 116-209.16A and for the programs operated by local boards of education providing
43 information to students under G.S. 115C-47(34b). For purposes of this section, the definitions
44 provided in G.S. 116-209.16A(a1) shall apply. As soon as practicable, the data compiled shall
45 include at least the following:

- 46 (1) The most in-demand jobs in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State,
47 including starting salary and education level required for those jobs.
48 (2) The breakdown of average cost for all public and private institutions of higher
49 education and vocational and technical schools in the State, respectively.

- (3) The average three-year student loan default rate for all public and private institutions of higher education and vocational and technical schools in the State.
- (4) The average total student loan debt for in-State graduates of public and private institutions of higher education for four-year degrees and graduate programs.
- (5) The average graduation rate for all public and private institutions of higher education and vocational and technical schools in the State.
- (6) The completion rates for apprenticeship programs, high school credential programs, career and technical education programs, and military first-term enlistments.
- (7) The share of college graduates working in an occupation that does not require a college degree for each major.
- (8) The average starting salary in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State for individuals graduating from public and private institutions of higher education.
- (9) The average starting salary in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State for individuals that have completed an apprenticeship program, high school credential program, or career and technical education program.
- (10) The average starting salary in the State and in each prosperity zone of the State for individuals graduating from a vocational and technical school in the State.

SECTION 5.(a) Grant Program Established. – From the funds appropriated by subsection (b) of this section, the Department of Public Instruction shall establish the Career Path Options Grant Pilot Program for the 2025-2026 school year for local boards of education to apply for funds to provide students with the information required under G.S. 115C-47(34b), as enacted by this act, to make informed decisions about postsecondary education choices and their professional futures. The Department shall establish application criteria for grants. Grant funds shall be used to promote and distribute program materials, including printing and distribution costs. Funds may also be used for hiring or paying supplemental compensation to career coaches or career development coordinators to support students through the program.

SECTION 5.(b) Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to implement the grant program established by this section.

SECTION 6. Sections 1 and 3 of this act become effective January 1, 2026. Section 5 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2025. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.