

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS15441-MTa-206

Short Title: K-12 Innovation and Transformation Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lee, Jones, and Corbin (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
3 PUBLIC EDUCATION, TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES TO THE LAWS AFFECTING
4 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND TO ENACT
5 PROVISIONS TO TRANSFORM THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7
8 **PART I. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUBLIC EDUCATION**

9
10 **NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN COMMISSION**

11 **SECTION 1.1.(a)** Commission Established. – There is established the North
12 Carolina High School Redesign Commission (Commission). The Commission shall be located
13 administratively in the Department of Public Instruction but shall exercise all of its prescribed
14 powers independently of the Department. The purpose of the Commission is to explore and
15 recommend changes to policies and systems governing high school and higher education that
16 will better prepare North Carolina students for success as they transition to higher education or
17 the workforce.

18 **SECTION 1.1.(b)** Commission Membership. – The Commission shall consist of 15
19 members as follows:

- 20 (1) Two members appointed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of
21 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
22 (2) Two members appointed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of
23 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
24 (3) One member appointed by the Governor.
25 (4) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or his or her designee.
26 (5) The President of The University of North Carolina or his or her designee.
27 (6) The President of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities or his
28 or her designee.
29 (7) The President of the North Carolina Community College System or his or her
30 designee.
31 (8) The chief executive officers of each of the following organizations, or their
32 designees: MyFutureNC, the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, BEST
33 NC, and SparkNC.
34 (9) One chief administrative officer or president of a community college
35 participating in a program, project, or initiative developed pursuant to this act
36 and one superintendent of a local school administrative unit participating in a



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1 program, project, or initiative developed pursuant to this act or their respective
2 designees. These members shall be appointed by the chair of the Commission
3 elected pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

4 **SECTION 1.1.(c)** The Commission shall elect a chair from the members appointed
5 by the General Assembly. Each member shall have one vote for the chair, except those members
6 to be appointed by the chair pursuant to subdivision (9) of subsection (b) of this section who shall
7 be appointed after a chair is elected. The Commission shall meet at least four times annually. The
8 Commission shall meet on the call of the chair or as additionally provided by the Commission.
9 A quorum is six members of the Commission. Members may not vote by proxy.

10 **SECTION 1.1.(d)** All members shall be appointed to terms for the entire duration of
11 the Commission. Any vacancy in a term shall be filled by the appointing authority for the
12 remainder of the unexpired term.

13 **SECTION 1.1.(e)** Commission Duties. – The Commission shall examine promising
14 practices in North Carolina and nationally to inform the Commission's recommendations. At a
15 minimum, the Commission shall consider the following:

- 16 (1) Flexible requirements for high school diplomas that are relevant to the
17 knowledge, skills, and abilities students will need for success in the future
18 workforce.
- 19 (2) Access to apprenticeships, internships, clinical experiences, and other
20 high-quality, work-based learning experiences while in high school.
- 21 (3) Opportunities for students to earn industry recognized credentials while in
22 high school.
- 23 (4) Partnerships between public school units and North Carolina Community
24 Colleges, The University of North Carolina, and North Carolina Independent
25 Colleges and Universities for the purposes of facilitating subdivisions (1)
26 through (3) of this subsection.
- 27 (5) Personalized pathways for students to satisfy core graduation requirements.
- 28 (6) Modular credit-bearing alternatives to semester or yearlong courses.
- 29 (7) Competency-based alternatives to time bound courses.
- 30 (8) Strategies for extending learning beyond school walls at scale via community
31 connected experiences, including incorporating incentives for local businesses
32 to partner with schools.
- 33 (9) Uses of artificial intelligence to expand student opportunities to engage in
34 career exploration and work-based learning experiences.
- 35 (10) Alternative funding models to enable the development of a statewide learning
36 ecosystem that encourages subdivisions (1) through (9) of this subsection.
- 37 (11) Career exploration opportunities for students in middle school and the first
38 two years of high school that prepare students to engage successfully in a
39 redesigned high school experience.
- 40 (12) Evaluation of the programs, projects, and initiatives established by this act,
41 and any other competency-based education (CBE) programs or high school
42 redesign efforts taking place in the State. The Commission shall partner with
43 the Office of Learning Research at the North Carolina Collaboratory to
44 conduct these evaluations.

45 **SECTION 1.1.(f)** Meetings and Organization. – The chair shall designate one or
46 more of the organizations identified in subdivision (8) of subsection (b) of this section to plan
47 and manage Commission meetings and draft reports. Designated organizations shall provide
48 administrative staff for meetings. Funds appropriated to the Department of Public Instruction to
49 be used to contract with one or more organizations to plan and manage Commission meetings
50 shall be divided equally among the organizations designated by the chair unless otherwise agreed
51 by the chair and all designated organizations.

1 **SECTION 1.1.(g)** Report. – The Commission shall submit a report to the Joint
2 Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 30, 2027, and annually thereafter. The
3 reports shall include all recommendations approved by a majority of Commission members and
4 a summary of any evaluations of the efficacy of any CBE programs and high school redesign
5 efforts implemented during the current school year.

6 **SECTION 1.1.(h)** The Commission shall terminate on June 30, 2031, or upon filing
7 of its final annual report, whichever occurs first.

8 9 **SME EDUCATION FOUNDATION PILOT PROGRAM**

10 **SECTION 1.2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
11 Public Instruction the sum of three million six hundred thousand dollars (\$3,600,000) in
12 nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be allocated as a directed grant to the SME
13 Education Foundation. The SME Education Foundation shall create a pilot program for the
14 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years for 10 high schools to receive equipment, curriculum,
15 professional development, scholarships, and STEM-focused extracurricular activities for
16 students and teachers that align with the SME PRIME (Partnership Response in Manufacturing
17 Education) Program. Funds appropriated in this section shall not revert but shall remain available
18 until the end of the 2027-2028 fiscal year.

19 20 **PROHIBITION ON EXCESSIVE EXPENDITURES**

21 **SECTION 1.3.** Part 3 of Article 31 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is
22 amended by adding a new section to read:

23 **"§ 115C-438.1. Prohibition on excessive expenditures by local school administrative units.**

24 (a) The Department of Public Instruction shall establish a procedure for reviewing
25 monthly expenditures by local school administrative units from specific State-funded dollar
26 allotments beginning with October of each school year. If a local school administrative unit has
27 expended more funds than allotted from a specific allotment, then the local school administrative
28 unit shall remit payment of the amount overexpended to the Department consistent with rules
29 and policies adopted by the State Board. If a local school administrative unit fails to remit
30 payment to the Department for more than 60 days, the State Board of Education shall exercise
31 its oversight authority pursuant to G.S. 115C-451.

32 (b) To the extent practicable, beginning with October of each school year, the Department
33 of Public Instruction shall conduct monthly audits of local school administrative unit
34 State-funded position allotments to ensure compliance with the requirements of this Chapter. If
35 the Department determines that a local school administrative unit is not compliant with the
36 requirements of this Chapter, the Department shall take action consistent with rules or policies
37 adopted by the State Board of Education."

38 39 **RENEWAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MODIFICATIONS AND STUDY OF RENEWAL** 40 **SCHOOL SYSTEM**

41 **SECTION 1.4.(a)** Section 6(p) of S.L. 2018-32 reads as rewritten:

42 **"SECTION 6.(p)** State Board of Education Review; Termination of Plan. – The State Board
43 shall conduct a review of the operation and student performance of the local school administrative
44 unit operating under an approved renewal school system plan following the end of the ~~2022-2023~~
45 ~~2028-2029~~ school year and, at least every ~~three~~-five years thereafter, to ensure that the unit is
46 meeting the expected academic, financial, and governance strategic goals set forth in the local
47 board of education's plan. The State Board may terminate the renewal school system plan after a
48 review upon any of the following grounds:

- 49 (1) Failure to meet the requirements for student performance contained in the
50 plan.

- 1 (2) The majority of schools in the local school administrative unit have been
2 identified as low-performing schools in the two school years immediately
3 preceding the review.

4 If the State Board determines that the local school administrative unit operating under an
5 approved renewal school system plan has failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal
6 management or violated State or federal law, the State Board may terminate the renewal school
7 system plan prior to the end of ~~2022-2023~~ the 2028-2029 school year. In addition, if the State
8 Superintendent finds that satisfactory progress is not being made after reviewing the reports
9 required to be submitted under subsection (q) of this section, the State Superintendent shall
10 recommend to the State Board that the renewal school system plan be terminated immediately.
11 The State Board shall terminate the renewal school system plan if such a recommendation is
12 made by the State Superintendent.

13 Upon termination of the renewal school system plan by the State Board, the State Board shall
14 develop a transition plan for the local board of education to revert to operating the local school
15 administrative unit in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations for other local school
16 administrative units."

17 **SECTION 1.4.(b)** Section 6(q) of S.L. 2018-32 reads as rewritten:

18 "**SECTION 6.(q)** Reporting to State Superintendent. – The local school administrative unit
19 operating under an approved renewal school system plan shall report to the State Superintendent
20 of Public Instruction as follows:

- 21 ~~(1) An annual report on the assessment instruments used pursuant to~~
22 ~~G.S. 115C-174.11(a) and the student outcomes based on those assessments.~~
23 ~~(2) An annual report on the number of classroom teacher and school administrator~~
24 ~~vacancies, turnover, and use of long term substitutes in filling vacancies for~~
25 ~~both classroom teachers and school administrators. This report shall also~~
26 ~~provide comparisons with the statewide data on these items. In addition, the~~
27 ~~report shall also provide comparisons with the previous year's data on these~~
28 ~~items both at the local school administrative unit level and statewide.~~
29 ~~(3) An annual report on student absences. This data shall provide comparisons~~
30 ~~with the previous year's data on these items.~~
31 ~~(4) Any other reporting requirements deemed necessary by the State~~
32 ~~Superintendent of Public Instruction.~~
33 (5) Proficiency data on each end-of-grade or end-of-course exam.
34 (6) EVAAS growth data for the local school administrative unit.
35 (7) The number of former students employed, enlisted in the Armed Forces of the
36 United States, or enrolled in a postsecondary educational program.
37 (8) The high school graduation rate for the local school administrative unit.
38 (9) The rate of chronic absenteeism in the local school administrative unit, with
39 chronic absenteeism being more than 10 absences within 90 instructional
40 days."

41 **SECTION 1.4.(c)** S.L. 2018-32 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

42 "**SECTION 6.(k1)** Teacher Evaluations. – Local school administrative units operating under
43 a renewal school system plan may use an alternative evaluation model to the North Carolina
44 Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) when evaluating teacher effectiveness."

45 **SECTION 1.4.(d)** The North Carolina Collaboratory shall conduct a study on the
46 following topics:

- 47 (1) The effect of the Renewal School System on student outcomes.
48 (2) An analysis of how financial and personnel flexibilities permitted under a
49 renewal school system plan have been utilized.

1 **SECTION 1.4.(e)** The North Carolina Collaboratory shall report on the results of the
2 study conducted pursuant to subsection (d) of this section to the Joint Legislative Education
3 Oversight Committee by January 15, 2028.

4 **SECTION 1.4.(f)** This section is effective when it becomes law.
5

6 **EXPAND AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT IN ADVANCED COURSES IN K-12**
7 **SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COURSES**

8 **SECTION 1.5.(a)** G.S. 115C-81.36 reads as rewritten:

9 "**§ 115C-81.36. Advanced courses in ~~mathematics~~mathematics and English Language**
10 **Arts.**

11 (a) When practicable, local boards of education shall offer advanced learning
12 opportunities ~~in mathematics~~ in grades three through five, and advanced courses ~~in mathematics~~
13 in all grades six and higher. For the purposes of this section, advanced learning opportunities are
14 those services and curricular modifications in mathematics and English Language Arts for
15 academically or intellectually gifted students approved as part of the local plan, as required by
16 ~~G.S. 115C-150.7~~G.S. 115C-150.7, and advanced courses are advanced courses in mathematics
17 and English Language Arts.

18 (a1) When advanced learning opportunities are offered ~~in mathematics~~ in grades three
19 through five, any student scoring at the highest level on the corresponding end-of-grade test shall,
20 for the next school year, be provided advanced learning opportunities ~~in mathematics~~ approved
21 for that student's grade level. ~~No student who qualifies under this subsection shall be removed~~
22 ~~from the advanced learning opportunity provided to the student unless a parent or guardian of the~~
23 ~~student provides written consent for the student to be excluded or removed after being adequately~~
24 ~~informed that the student's placement was determined by the student's achievement on the~~
25 ~~previous end-of-grade test.~~

26 (b) When advanced courses are offered ~~in mathematics~~ in grades six and higher, any
27 student scoring at the highest level on the corresponding end-of-grade or end-of-course test for
28 the ~~mathematics~~ course in which the student was most recently enrolled shall be enrolled in the
29 advanced course for the next ~~mathematics~~ course in which the student is enrolled. ~~A student in~~
30 ~~seventh grade scoring at the highest level on the seventh grade mathematics end-of-grade test~~
31 ~~shall be enrolled in a high school level mathematics course in eighth grade. Local boards of~~
32 ~~education may provide supplemental content enrichment, which may include the administration~~
33 ~~of diagnostic assessments, to students enrolled in a high school level mathematics course. No~~
34 ~~student who qualifies under this subsection shall be removed from the advanced or high school~~
35 ~~mathematics course in which the student is enrolled unless a parent or guardian of the student~~
36 ~~provides written consent for the student to be excluded or removed from that course after being~~
37 ~~adequately informed that the student's placement was determined by the student's achievement~~
38 ~~on the previous end-of-grade or end-of-course test.~~

39 **(b1)** When a high school mathematics course is offered in eighth grade, a student in
40 seventh grade scoring at the highest level on the seventh grade mathematics end-of-grade test
41 shall be enrolled in a high school level mathematics course in eighth grade.

42 (c) ~~By December 15, 2020, and annually thereafter, the~~ The Department of Public
43 Instruction shall submit a report annually by December 15 to the Joint Legislative Education
44 Oversight Committee containing data collected for the current school year on the ~~number and~~
45 ~~demographics~~ number, demographics, and socioeconomic status of students who were eligible
46 for advanced ~~mathematics~~ courses under this section, including high school level mathematics
47 courses in eighth grade, and of those students, the ~~number and demographics~~ number,
48 demographics, and socioeconomic status of those who were placed in advanced ~~mathematics~~
49 courses and were not placed in advanced ~~mathematics~~ courses. The report shall include
50 information on the type and format of advanced ~~mathematics~~ courses provided and shall also
51 include any feedback provided by local boards of education on the implementation of this section.

1 (d) The Department of Public Instruction shall provide guidance to local boards of
2 education on how to best develop programming and courses to ensure all impacted students
3 receive rigorous, academically appropriate instruction in ~~mathematics~~-mathematics and English
4 Language Arts.

5 (e) No student who qualifies for advanced learning opportunities or advanced courses
6 under this section shall be removed from the advanced learning opportunity or advanced course
7 provided to the student unless a parent or guardian of the student provides written consent for the
8 student to be excluded or removed after being adequately informed that the student's placement
9 was determined by the student's achievement on the previous end-of-grade or end-of-course test.
10 Local boards of education may provide supplemental content enrichment, which may include the
11 administration of diagnostic assessments, to students enrolled in advanced courses."

12 **SECTION 1.5.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies
13 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

14 SPARKNC EXPANSION

15 **SECTION 1.6.(a)** Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
16 adding a new Part to read:

17 "Part 12. Experiential Learning.

18 **"§ 115C-238.90. Learning Accelerator programs.**

19 (a) Purpose. – Public school units may work with eligible partners to develop
20 nontraditional, student-driven pathways through which students may select and complete
21 Learning Accelerators. Learning Accelerators are modular learning experiences focused on
22 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), that, when aggregated, will provide
23 competency-based equivalency to traditional elective course credit.

24 (b) Eligible Partners. – To be eligible to be a partner to assist a public school unit in
25 developing a Learning Accelerator program, the partner must be able to provide a menu of
26 modular learning experiences that include opportunities for work-based learning.

27 (c) Memorandum of Understanding. – Public school units shall enter into a memorandum
28 of understanding with an eligible partner to establish certain requirements for the Learning
29 Accelerator program. These requirements shall include the following:

- 30 (1) The provision of a physical learning lab staffed by a learning lab facilitator,
31 that will provide a site for collaborative learning and networking.
- 32 (2) The qualifications and standards for learning lab facilitators. Notwithstanding
33 G.S. 115C-295 and any related State Board of Education rules, learning lab
34 facilitators shall not be required to hold teacher licensure but shall meet the
35 standards established by the memorandum of understanding. Learning lab
36 facilitators shall be subject to the criminal history check requirements of Part
37 6 of Article 22 of this Chapter.
- 38 (3) A description of the learning lab facilitator's duties, which shall include
39 providing student advising, designing learning experiences, coordinating with
40 industry partners, and validating student work. Learning lab facilitators shall
41 be the teacher of record for students enrolled in a Learning Accelerator.
42 Learning lab facilitators shall network with other learning lab facilitators to
43 share best practices across public school units.
- 44 (4) An operating schedule agreed upon by the public school unit and the eligible
45 partner. For the purposes of student participation in a Learning Accelerator,
46 the calendar requirements of Part 2 of Article 8 of this Chapter shall not apply.
47 Students may continue to participate in a Learning Accelerator and aggregate
48 learning experiences throughout the time the students are enrolled in the
49 public school unit and shall not be limited to a semester or school year.
50

1 Learning experiences may be provided to students in person, remotely, or
2 through asynchronous learning experiences.

3 (d) Contractors. – Additional nonlicensed personnel may be contracted with on a full- or
4 part-time basis for the purpose of providing timely, real-world content, industry expertise, and
5 student learning experiences as part of a Learning Accelerator program. Contract personnel shall
6 be subject to the criminal history check requirements of Part 6 of Article 22 of this Chapter.

7 (e) Course Credit. – Public school units shall award elective credit in a Learning
8 Accelerator to any student who completes a combination of learning experiences determined by
9 the eligible partner to provide the competency-based equivalent of an elective credit in that course
10 upon verification of successful completion of the learning experiences and integrity of student
11 work products by the learning lab facilitator. Course credit shall be awarded in accordance with
12 the following:

13 (1) A student may earn up to four credits in Learning Accelerators but may not
14 complete the same learning experience more than once for credit.

15 (2) A student's participation in a Learning Accelerator but failure to earn elective
16 credit shall not be denoted as a fail on the student's transcript.

17 (3) The elective credit shall be denoted on the student's transcript as achieved
18 competency in either a High-Tech Learning Accelerator or a Health Science
19 Learning Accelerator.

20 (4) Successful completion of a high-tech learning accelerator satisfies the
21 computer science graduation requirement pursuant to G.S. 115C-81.90.

22 (f) Use of Funds. – Any State funds provided to a public school unit for the purposes of
23 Learning Accelerator programs may only be used for salaries and benefits of learning lab
24 facilitators or hiring contract personnel. These funds shall not be converted for any other purpose.
25 Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-316 or any other law or rule to the contrary, public school units are
26 not required to pay learning lab facilitators based on the teacher salary schedule.

27 (g) Funding for Local School Administrative Units. – To the extent funds are made
28 available for the purpose, the State Board of Education shall establish a funding allotment for
29 Learning Accelerator program learning lab facilitator positions. Funds shall be allocated to
30 provide one learning lab facilitator position to each local school administrative unit.

31 (h) Report. – No later than March 1 of each year, the Department of Public Instruction
32 shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the following
33 information, disaggregated for each public school unit by grade level and school, when
34 practicable:

35 (1) Number and percentage of students with access to a Learning Accelerator
36 program.

37 (2) Student retention and persistence in Learning Accelerator programs.

38 (3) Student completion of Learning Accelerator elective credits and student
39 achievement of personalized learning goals.

40 (4) Student evaluation of the Learning Accelerator programs.

41 (5) Student interest in STEM following participation in a Learning Accelerator
42 program.

43 (6) Cost per student for Learning Accelerator programs.

44 (7) Number and percentage of students who have participated in a Learning
45 Accelerator program who choose to pursue a career pathway or further study
46 in a STEM field.

47 (8) Number and percentage of public school units that established a Learning
48 Accelerator program and public school unit persistence in maintaining the
49 program.

1 (9) Recommendations for program changes, including recommended legislative
2 changes and changes needed to ensure that federal funding for career and
3 technical education can be used for the Learning Accelerator programs.

4 (10) Recommendations on development of a competency transcript."

5 **SECTION 1.6.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
6 of Public Instruction the sum of eight million eight hundred fifty-five thousand dollars
7 (\$8,855,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year for the Department to
8 administer the Learning Accelerator learning lab facilitator allotment, as established by this act.

9 **SECTION 1.6.(c)** SparkNC, Inc., is an eligible partner for Learning Accelerator
10 programs, as authorized by this act. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
11 Department of Public Instruction the sum of six million five hundred thousand dollars
12 (\$6,500,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be allocated as a grant
13 to SparkNC, Inc., for administrative costs associated with being an eligible partner for Learning
14 Accelerator programs.

15 **SECTION 1.6.(d)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
16 of Public Instruction the sum of five million seven hundred eighty thousand dollars (\$5,780,000)
17 in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be allocated as a directed grant to
18 SparkNC, Inc., for start-up costs associated with expanding to provide services in additional
19 public schools with the goal of providing services statewide. Funds appropriated pursuant to this
20 subsection shall not revert at the end of the 2026-2027 fiscal year but instead shall remain
21 available until June 30, 2029.

22 **SECTION 1.6.(e)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2026, and applies
23 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

24 25 **EXTENDED LEARNING AND INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS COMPETITIVE** 26 **GRANT PROGRAM**

27 **SECTION 1.7.(a)** Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by
28 adding a new Part to read:

29 "Part 7A. Extended Learning and Integrated Student Supports Grant Program.

30 **§ 115C-238.35. Program; purpose.**

31 (a) Program; Purpose. – There is established the Extended Learning and Integrated
32 Student Supports Grant Program (Program). Nonprofit corporations and nonprofit corporations
33 working in collaboration with local school administrative units operating relevant programs may
34 apply for the Program. The purpose of the Program is to fund high-quality, independently
35 validated extended learning and integrated student support service programs for at-risk students
36 that raise standards for student academic outcomes by focusing on the following:

37 (1) Use of an evidence-based model with a proven track record of success.

38 (2) Inclusion of rigorous, quantitative performance measures to confirm
39 effectiveness of the program.

40 (3) Deployment of multiple tiered supports in schools to address student barriers
41 to achievement, such as strategies to improve chronic absenteeism, antisocial
42 behaviors, academic growth, and enhancement of parent and family
43 engagement.

44 (4) Alignment with State performance measures, student academic goals, and the
45 North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

46 (5) Prioritization in programs to integrate clear academic content, in particular,
47 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning
48 opportunities or reading development and proficiency instruction.

49 (6) Minimization of student class size when providing instruction or instructional
50 supports and interventions.

1 (7) Expansion of student access to high-quality learning activities and academic
2 support that strengthen student engagement and leverage community-based
3 resources, which may include organizations that provide mentoring services
4 and private-sector employer involvement.

5 (8) Utilization of digital content to expand learning time, when appropriate.

6 (b) Program Requirements. – In each year in which sufficient funds are available, the
7 Department of Public Instruction shall administer the Program in accordance with this Part.

8 (c) Program Funding. – The Department shall use up to seven million dollars
9 (\$7,000,000) from the At-Risk Student Services Alternative School Allotment each fiscal year
10 to fund the Program. Of the funds allocated for the Program, the Department may use up to two
11 hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for each fiscal year for expenses of administering the
12 Program.

13 **"§ 115C-238.36. Awards; eligible uses.**

14 (a) Eligible Uses. – Grants shall be used to award funds for new or existing eligible
15 programs for at-risk students operated by nonprofit corporations and nonprofit corporations
16 working in collaboration with local school administrative units. Programs should focus on
17 servicing (i) at-risk students not performing at grade level as demonstrated by statewide
18 assessments, (ii) students at risk of dropout, and (iii) students at risk of school displacement due
19 to suspension or expulsion as a result of antisocial behaviors. Priority consideration shall be given
20 to applications demonstrating models that focus services and programs in schools that are
21 identified as low-performing pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.37.

22 (b) Awards; Required Match. – Grant participants are eligible to receive grants for up to
23 two years in an amount of up to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) each year. A grant
24 participant shall provide certification to the Department of Public Instruction that the grants
25 received under the Program shall be matched on the basis of three dollars (\$3.00) in grant funds
26 for every one dollar (\$1.00) in nongrant funds. Matching funds shall not include other State funds.
27 The Department shall also give priority consideration to an applicant that is a nonprofit
28 corporation working in partnership with a local school administrative unit resulting in a match
29 utilizing federal funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
30 1965, as amended, or Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and other federal
31 or local funds. Matching funds may include in-kind contributions for up to fifty percent (50%)
32 of the required match.

33 (c) Fiscal Agent. – A nonprofit corporation may act as its own fiscal agent for the
34 purposes of this Program.

35 **"§ 115C-238.37. Reporting requirements.**

36 (a) Recipient Reporting. – No later than July 15 of each year in which a grant recipient
37 is participating in the Program, the recipient shall report to the Department of Public Instruction
38 on the expenditure of grant funds and the progress of the Program, including alignment with State
39 academic standards, data collection for reporting student progress, the source and amount of
40 matching funds, and other measures, before receiving funding for the next fiscal year. Grant
41 recipients shall also submit a final report on key performance data, including statewide test
42 results, attendance rates, graduation rates, and promotion rates, and financial sustainability of the
43 Program.

44 (b) Department Reporting. – No later than September 15 of each year of the Program, the
45 Department of Public Instruction shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight
46 Committee on the Program, including recommendations regarding effective program models,
47 standards, and performance measures based on student performance, leveraging of
48 community-based resources to expand student access to learning activities, academic and
49 behavioral support services, and potential opportunities for the State to invest in proven models
50 for future grant programs."

1 **SECTION 1.7.(b)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2026, and applies
2 beginning with the 2027-2028 school year.

3 4 **SCHOOLS IN COMMERCIAL ZONES**

5 **SECTION 1.8.(a)** Part 1 of Article 9 of Chapter 160D of the General Statutes is
6 amended by adding a new section to read:

7 **"§ 160D-917. Public school sites in commercial zones.**

8 In areas zoned for commercial use, zoning regulations shall permit, by right or by special use,
9 the siting of a school building that is primarily used for the instruction of students and is under
10 the control of a public school unit as defined in G.S. 115C-5."

11 **SECTION 1.8.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law.

12 13 **INCREASE FUNDING FOR ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES SALARY** 14 **SUPPLEMENTS AND GRANTS**

15 **SECTION 1.9.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
16 of Public Instruction an additional forty-three million three hundred thousand dollars
17 (\$43,300,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to bring the total revised
18 net appropriation to the Department to fifty-four million two hundred thousand dollars
19 (\$54,200,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year for the Department to
20 allocate to public school units participating in the Advanced Teaching Roles program to provide
21 salary supplements under G.S. 115C-310.13.

22 **SECTION 1.9.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
23 of Public Instruction an additional four million dollars (\$4,000,000) in recurring funds beginning
24 in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to bring the total revised net appropriation to the Department to nine
25 million five hundred forty thousand dollars (\$9,540,000) in recurring funds beginning in the
26 2026-2027 fiscal year for the Department to expand the Advanced Teaching Roles grant program
27 in accordance with Article 20A of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes. For the 2026-2027 fiscal
28 year only, the Department shall prioritize awarding Advanced Teaching Roles grants to public
29 school units that qualified for a grant in the 2025-2026 fiscal year but did not receive the grant
30 due to insufficient funding.

31 **SECTION 1.9.(c)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2026.

32 33 **TEACHER EVALUATION PILOT PROGRAM**

34 **SECTION 1.10.(a)** Program Established; Purpose. – The State Board of Education
35 shall establish the Teacher Evaluation Pilot Program (Program) for the 2026-2027 school year
36 through the 2029-2030 school year. The purpose of the Program is to establish a robust set of
37 meaningful teacher professional evaluation tools that do the following:

- 38 (1) Support improved teacher professional development.
- 39 (2) Provide opportunities for career advancement for teachers.
- 40 (3) Provide additional insights for accountability for educator preparation
41 programs.
- 42 (4) Facilitate licensure renewal.

43 **SECTION 1.10.(b)** Professional Evaluation Tools Selection. – No later than March
44 15, 2027, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Professional Educator
45 Preparation Standards Commission, The University of North Carolina Board of Governors, the
46 State Board of Community Colleges, and educator preparation programs, shall select at least
47 three professional evaluation tools for use by local school administrative units in accordance with
48 this section. The professional evaluation tools selected by the State Board shall meet at least the
49 following requirements:

- 50 (1) Be evidence-based and replicable.

- 1 (2) Provide feedback that supports each teacher's professional development and
2 career experience, which may include evidence of student outcomes, student
3 surveys, or independent evaluations.
- 4 (3) Be designed to provide all of the following:
 - 5 a. Improved professional development for all teachers.
 - 6 b. Improved licensure criteria and multiple tools for teachers to provide
7 real, student-focused evidence for a continuing professional license.
 - 8 c. Reduce the administrative burden on principals who are required to
9 conduct teacher evaluations multiple times per year.
 - 10 d. Additional insights for the selection of advanced teaching roles and
11 mentorship positions, for licensure renewal, and for other
12 accountability metrics for educator preparation programs.
- 13 (4) To the extent possible, at least two of the professional evaluation tools selected
14 by the State Board shall meet the following additional requirements:
 - 15 a. Be available to all teachers in the local school administrative unit.
 - 16 b. Include student surveys and independent performance evaluations.

17 **SECTION 1.10.(c) Participation.** – Local school administrative units may apply to
18 the State Board of Education to participate in the Program. The State Board shall select units to
19 participate in the Program each year, beginning in the 2027-2028 school year and ending in the
20 2029-2030 school year. At the discretion of the State Board, a local school administrative unit
21 may participate in the Program for one or more school years over the duration of the Program.

22 **SECTION 1.10.(d) Licensure Renewal Flexibility.** – Notwithstanding
23 G.S. 115C-270.30(b)(4), at the direction of the State Board, local school administrative units that
24 are participating in the Program may use one or more of the Professional Evaluation Tools
25 selected by the State Board pursuant to subsection (b) of this section to determine proficiency for
26 a teacher to maintain his or her current license status under G.S. 115C-270.30(b)(4).

27 **SECTION 1.10.(e) Report.** – No later than March 15, 2029, the State Board of
28 Education shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee with the following
29 information:

- 30 (1) The local school administrative units selected to participate in the Program.
- 31 (2) The impact of the Program on teacher evaluation in the participating local
32 school administrative units.
- 33 (3) The professional evaluation tools selected for the Program.
- 34 (4) The impact of the Program on teacher licensure renewal, including differences
35 in renewal rates in local school administrative units participating in the
36 Program and all other local school administrative units.
- 37 (5) A plan to implement the Program on a statewide basis beginning in the
38 2030-2031 school year, including any waivers of existing law that may be
39 needed to facilitate the transition.

40 **SECTION 1.10.(f) Funds.** – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
41 Department of Public Instruction for the 2026-2027 fiscal year the sum of six million dollars
42 (\$6,000,000) in nonrecurring funds to implement the Program described in this section. These
43 funds shall not revert at the end of the 2026-2027 fiscal year but shall remain available until June
44 30, 2030.

45 **REVISION OF HEALTHY LIVING STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY**

46 **SECTION 1.11.(a)** Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the
47 State Board of Education shall conduct an expedited revision of the NC Standard Course of Study
48 for Healthful Living, Grades K-12 standards to be adopted and implemented beginning with the
49 2028-2029 school year. The revised standards shall include standards on the following:

- 50 (1) Mental health awareness.
- 51

- 1 (2) Common mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and trauma,
2 and their warning signs.
- 3 (3) Help-seeking strategies for self and peers, including school and community
4 resources.
- 5 (4) The neurological basis of addiction.
- 6 (5) The risks of alcohol, nicotine and vaping, cannabis, opioids, misuse of
7 prescription drugs, and other illicit substances.
- 8 (6) The relationship between mental health and substance abuse.
- 9 (7) Treatment, recovery, and prevention of mental health disorders, including
10 reducing the stigma surrounding mental health disorders.
- 11 (8) The effects of social media and other environmental influences on mental
12 health and addictive behavior.
- 13 (9) Protective factors, coping skills, and sound decision making.

14 **SECTION 1.11.(b)** The Department of Public Instruction shall report to the Joint
15 Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2028, on the following:

- 16 (1) Adoption and implementation status of the NC Standard Course of Study for
17 Healthful Living, Grades K-12 standards required by subsection (a) of this
18 section.
- 19 (2) Early implementation feedback from local school administrative units.
- 20 (3) Recommended technical changes to the standards.

21 AI ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

22 **SECTION 1.12.(a)** Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a
23 new Article to read:

24 "Article 42.

25 "Academic Support Programs.

26 **"§ 115C-650. Establish AI Academic Support Program.**

27 (a) Purpose; Program. – There is established the AI Instructional Support Program
28 (Program) to allow public school units to contract with Khan Academy, Inc., (Khan Academy)
29 for use of the academic support service Khanmigo, in grades six through 12. Khanmigo is an
30 application that uses artificial intelligence to support teachers with lesson plan development and
31 to support students with lesson comprehension.

32 (b) Funding. – Funds shall be allocated to each public school unit that elects to participate
33 in the program on the basis of average daily membership (ADM) in grades six through 12 in the
34 public school unit for the purposes set out in this section.

35 (c) Funding Use. – Public school units that utilize funds pursuant to this section shall use
36 all funds to contract with Khan Academy for use of the Khanmigo service, any associated
37 professional development, and the rostering programs required pursuant to subsection (e) of this
38 section.

39 (d) Contract Term. – Public school units entering into contracts with Khan Academy shall
40 contract for a term of one year. At the end of each school year, each public school unit shall
41 evaluate the use of Khanmigo services in the public school unit prior to contracting with Khan
42 Academy for the subsequent school year. The evaluation shall include all of the information
43 required to be reported on by the Department of Public Instruction in subdivisions (2) through
44 (7) of subsection (g) of this section. Public school units shall submit their evaluations to the
45 Department of Public Instruction by July 15 of each year that funds are used pursuant to this
46 section.

47 (e) Class Rostering for Khanmigo. – All public school units that contract with Khan
48 Academy pursuant to this section shall use a secure, cloud-based, single sign-on and class
49 rostering platform to manage access to digital instructional resources and student information
50 systems and to facilitate automated data integration between educational applications and school
51

1 district systems. Class rostering products used pursuant to this section must be approved by the
 2 Department of Public Instruction.

3 (f) Juvenile Justice. – The Department of Public Instruction shall contract with Khan for
 4 500 Khanmigo licenses for use in schools operated by the Division of Juvenile Justice of the
 5 Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Instruction shall provide technical
 6 support to the Division of Juvenile Justice for the use of Khanmigo. The Division of Juvenile
 7 Justice shall comply with evaluation requirements pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

8 (g) Study. – The Office of Learning Research at the North Carolina Collaboratory (OLR)
 9 shall design and conduct a study to measure the effectiveness of using Khanmigo, including any
 10 impact on student performance and growth. As part of the study, the Department of Public
 11 Instruction shall aggregate and report to OLR on the evaluations submitted by public school units
 12 pursuant to subsection (d) of this section. OLR shall collaborate with Khan Academy to aggregate
 13 data on student performance by teacher and by subgroup, to the extent allowed by law. OLR shall
 14 provide the results of this study to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later
 15 than April 1, 2028.

16 (h) Report. – No later than February 15 of each year in which funds are made available
 17 for the Program, the Department of Public Instruction shall report to the Joint Legislative
 18 Education Oversight Committee at least the following information:

19 (1) The number of public school units that contracted with Khan Academy
 20 pursuant to this Article.

21 (2) The number of students using the Khanmigo application.

22 (3) The average number of minutes and interactions students had with the
 23 Khanmigo application weekly.

24 (4) The number of teachers using the application.

25 (5) The average number of minutes and interactions teachers had with the
 26 Khanmigo application weekly.

27 (6) Any identified impact on student outcomes.

28 (7) Any identified impact on teacher performance.

29 (8) The number of moderation flags generated by the application."

30 **SECTION 1.12.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
 31 of Public Instruction the sum of ten million sixty thousand five hundred sixty dollars
 32 (\$10,060,560) in recurring funds beginning with the 2026-2027 fiscal year to allocate funds
 33 pursuant to G.S. 115C-650, as enacted by this act.

34 **TEACHREADYNC PROGRAM**

35 **SECTION 1.13.(a)** The title of Article 17D reads as rewritten:

36 "Educator Preparation Programs-Preparation."

37 **SECTION 1.13.(b)** Article 17D of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended
 38 to add the following new Parts:

39 (1) Part 1, to be entitled "Educator Preparation Programs" and consisting of
 40 G.S. 115C-269.1 through G.S. 115C-269.30 and G.S. 115C-269.35 through
 41 G.S. 115C-269.55.

42 (2) Part 2, to be entitled "Teacher Pipeline Support Programs" and consisting of
 43 the below provisions to be recodified as follows:

<u>Former Citation</u>	<u>Recodified Citation</u>
115C-269.31	115C-269.75
115C-269.32	115C-269.77

44 **SECTION 1.13.(c)** G.S. 115C-269.5 reads as rewritten:

45 **"§ 115C-269.5. Educator preparation programs.**

1 (a) Role of EPPs. – An EPP shall prepare students for educator licensure and meet the
2 standards and requirements set forth in this ~~Article-Part~~. To recommend students for licensure,
3 an EPP shall be recognized by the State Board.

4 (b) State Board Authority. – The State Board shall initially authorize and recognize an
5 EPP as required by this ~~Article-Part~~. The State Board shall have authority to regulate EPPs in
6 accordance with this ~~Article-Part~~.

7"

8 **SECTION 1.13.(d)** G.S. 115C-269.10(b) reads as rewritten:

9 "(b) Rules for Granting State Approval. – The State Board shall adopt rules for granting
10 approval to EPPs in accordance with this ~~Article-Part~~. The rules shall ensure the following:

11 (1) A rigorous approval process that requires that the criteria in this ~~Article-Part~~
12 are met.

13 (2) An application process, peer review, and technical assistance provided by the
14 State Board.

15 (3) An approval period of five years and process for renewal of approval."

16 **SECTION 1.13.(e)** G.S. 115C-269.45(a)(3) reads as rewritten:

17 "(3) Revoked. – An EPP shall be assigned revoked status and its approval to
18 recommend students for educator licensure revoked if it meets any of the
19 following criteria:

20 a. Is assigned probation status for three consecutively measured years.

21 b. Has been on probation status for one year and the State Board
22 determines that revoking the program's approval is reasonably
23 necessary to achieve the purposes of this ~~Article-Part~~."

24 **SECTION 1.13.(f)** G.S. 115C-269.55(a) reads as rewritten:

25 "(a) Authority. – The State Board shall adopt rules necessary to establish a process for a
26 student to report a violation of this ~~Article-Part~~ to the State Board."

27 **SECTION 1.13.(g)** Part 2 of Article 17D of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes,
28 as enacted by subsection (b) of Section 1 of this act, reads as rewritten:

29 "Part 2. Teacher Pipeline Support Programs.

30 **"§ 115C-269.65. Definitions.**

31 Definitions. – Except as otherwise provided, the following definitions apply in this Part:

32 (1) Apprentice. – An individual employed as an apprentice teacher by a
33 participating unit.

34 (2) Apprentice supervisor. – An experienced teacher employed by a participating
35 unit who mentors an apprentice and is a member of a team of teachers that is
36 led by a teacher with an advanced teaching role, as defined in
37 G.S. 115C-310.3.

38 (3) Department. – The Department of Public Instruction.

39 (4) Eligible unit. – A local school administrative unit that is an Advanced
40 Teaching Roles unit, as defined in G.S. 115C-310.3(6).

41 (5) Eligible educator preparation program. – A recognized educator preparation
42 program that meets all of the following criteria:

43 a. Is either an institution of higher education or a public school unit.

44 b. Is selected by a participating unit to enroll apprentices employed by
45 that unit.

46 (6) Participating unit. – An eligible unit selected by the Department to participate
47 in TeachReadyNC.

48 (7) TeachReadyNC. – The TeachReadyNC Program established pursuant to
49 G.S. 115C-269.67.

50 **"§ 115C-269.67. TeachReadyNC Program.**

1 (a) Program Established; Purpose. – There is established the TeachReadyNC Program to
2 increase the number of professionally licensed teachers in the State and improve teacher
3 competency, student outcomes, and teacher retention in the State. The Department shall
4 administer TeachReadyNC, in collaboration with ApprenticeshipNC, as set forth in this Part.

5 (b) Applications. – No later than November 1 of each year, the Department shall issue a
6 request for applications from eligible units to participate in TeachReadyNC, beginning in the
7 subsequent school year. Applications shall include at least the following information:

8 (1) A plan to obtain recognition by the United States Department of Labor as a
9 registered teacher apprenticeship program in collaboration with
10 ApprenticeshipNC, including at least the following information:

11 a. The number of apprentices the unit intends to employ.

12 b. The total grant funds the unit requests for each apprentice position in
13 accordance with the requirements of G.S. 115C-269.69.

14 c. Specific subject areas and grade levels in the local school
15 administrative unit with teacher shortages.

16 (2) A system of supports that would be provided for apprentices, including (i)
17 apprentice supervisors and their qualifications and (ii) a schedule of
18 supervision.

19 (3) Alternative sources of funding, including federal workforce development
20 funds, to support apprenticeships that could be paired with any State funds
21 that could be used for TeachReadyNC pursuant to subsection (f) of this section
22 or G.S. 115C-269.69.

23 (4) An explanation of how the unit would incorporate its teacher apprenticeship
24 program with its advanced teaching roles program to enhance the learning
25 environment for apprentices.

26 (5) Strategies to encourage candidates to accept an apprenticeship before directly
27 entering the teaching profession.

28 (6) A list of eligible educator preparation programs.

29 (c) Selection of Participants; Initial Term. – The Department shall review applications
30 for participation in TeachReadyNC every three months of each school year following the
31 issuance of the request for applications. The Department shall approve applications on a rolling
32 basis and shall approve every application from an eligible unit for a term of three years as long
33 as the application includes a clear strategy to support apprenticeships that complies with the
34 requirements of subsection (b) of this section.

35 (d) Program Requirements. – All participating units shall meet the following
36 requirements:

37 (1) Obtain recognition as a registered teacher apprenticeship program under
38 requirements established by the United States Department of Labor.

39 (2) Require each apprentice to work full-time in a classroom with an apprentice
40 supervisor.

41 (3) Ensure that each apprentice meets all of the following requirements:

42 a. Holds a bachelor's degree.

43 b. Is not eligible to hold an initial professional license or continuing
44 professional license.

45 c. Does not serve as a teacher of record for any students.

46 d. Is enrolled in an eligible educator preparation program.

47 e. Submits a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for each
48 year in which the individual is employed as an apprentice.

49 f. Does not engage in substitute teaching for more than eight hours per
50 week.

51 g. Does not work as an apprentice for more than three years.

- 1 (4) Provide each apprentice with the following:
2 a. Annual compensation that is greater than the average salary provided
3 to a teacher assistant employed in the participating unit.
4 b. Financial support for the cost of attendance at an eligible educator
5 preparation program, including subject-specific content courses
6 required for licensure at the associated institution of higher education.

- 7 (5) Provide salary supplements for the following persons:
8 a. Each apprentice supervisor.
9 b. Each teacher who agrees to become a teacher of record for additional
10 students as a result of the emergency position conversion permitted
11 under subsection (f) of this section.

12 (e) Term Renewal. – Prior to the conclusion of a three-year term in TeachReadyNC, a
13 participating unit may apply to the Department to renew its term. The Department shall evaluate
14 the success of TeachReadyNC at the participating unit and the compliance of the participating
15 unit with the requirements of this Part. At the conclusion of the evaluation, the Department may,
16 in its discretion, renew the participating unit for an additional term. Participating units shall
17 provide any information or access requested by the Department for the evaluation required by
18 this section or G.S. 115C-269.35.

19 (f) Emergency Position Conversion. – Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-105.25(b), a
20 participating unit may convert one position allocated to the participating unit for classroom
21 teachers to its dollar equivalent at the salary on the first step of the "A" Teachers Salary Schedule,
22 including benefits, for each apprentice employed by the unit. Funds made available pursuant to
23 this subsection may only be used for the following purposes:

- 24 (1) Salaries for apprentices.
25 (2) Annual salary supplements of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each
26 teacher accepting additional students as a result of an emergency position
27 conversion occurring pursuant to this subsection.
28 (3) The permitted purposes and maximum amounts identified in
29 G.S. 115C-269.69(b).

30 (g) Administration. – To the extent funds are appropriated for TeachReadyNC, including
31 TeachReadyNC grants under G.S. 115C-269.69, the Department may retain the greater of fifteen
32 percent (15%) or three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) each year for administration of
33 TeachReadyNC. As part of the administration of TeachReadyNC, the Department may establish
34 one or more new full-time employment positions to support the Program and shall do at least all
35 of the following:

- 36 (1) Collaborate with ApprenticeshipNC to do all of the following:
37 a. Outline the duties and responsibilities of apprentices, including
38 on-the-job training requirements.
39 b. Create minimum competencies for apprentices that reflect the
40 progressive acquisition of ability.
41 c. Develop a process to monitor apprentices in their first years of
42 teaching after successful completion of TeachReadyNC to evaluate the
43 qualities of teacher candidates that correlate to successful outcomes
44 and lower teacher turnover rates.
45 d. Create resources that can be used by participating units to select and
46 train apprentice supervisors, including the responsibilities of an
47 apprentice supervisor and background information on teacher
48 apprenticeship programs.
49 e. Develop a training module for apprentice supervisors that establishes
50 standards for apprentice supervisors under TeachReadyNC and

- 1 incorporates, where applicable, any preexisting standards for
2 apprentice supervisors.
- 3 (2) Collaborate with eligible educator preparation programs and
4 ApprenticeshipNC to establish education requirements for apprentices and
5 revise curriculum requirements for clinical internships to include
6 apprenticeships under TeachReadyNC.
- 7 (3) Assist participating units with the following:
- 8 a. Combining State, federal, and other funds to maximize the number of
9 apprentices.
- 10 b. Complying with applicable State and federal law.
- 11 (4) Allocate any grant funds pursuant to G.S. 115C-269.69.
- 12 (h) Report. – No later than March 15 of each year, the Department, in consultation with
13 ApprenticeshipNC, shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the
14 current state of TeachReadyNC, including at least all of the following information:
- 15 (1) The impact of TeachReadyNC in each participating unit on the following:
- 16 a. The number of teachers, disaggregated by licensure type.
- 17 b. Student outcomes.
- 18 c. Teacher retention.
- 19 (2) Any non-State funds used to support TeachReadyNC, including the sources
20 and amounts of those funds.
- 21 (3) The number of participating units that converted a teaching position in order
22 to support the Program and the use or uses of those funds.
- 23 (4) Successful strategies and best practices used by participating units.
- 24 (5) Any barriers to expanding TeachReadyNC.

25 **"§ 115C-269.69. TeachReadyNC Grants.**

26 (a) Grant Allocation. – To the extent funds are appropriated by the General Assembly for
27 TeachReadyNC, the Department shall allocate grant funds to participating units each fiscal year
28 for each apprentice position. For purposes of this section, the cost of an apprentice position is the
29 amount identified by a participating unit in its TeachReadyNC application under
30 G.S. 115C-269.67(b) and constitutes the salary supplement for an apprentice, the cost of
31 attendance payment for an apprentice, and the salary supplement for the apprentice supervisor of
32 an apprentice, up to the maximum amounts provided in subsection (b) of this section. In addition,
33 the Department shall comply with the following requirements when allocating funds pursuant to
34 this section:

- 35 (1) If the TeachReadyNC funds are insufficient to fund all apprentice positions
36 identified in the applications of the participating units at the amounts provided
37 in those applications, the Department shall reduce the number of apprentice
38 positions provided to the participating units but shall not reduce the funding
39 amounts provided for each position below the amounts identified in the
40 applications.
- 41 (2) If there are TeachReadyNC funds remaining after funds have been allocated
42 pursuant to the requirements of this section, the Department may allocate the
43 remaining funds to participating units according to a process developed by the
44 Department to optimize the success of TeachReadyNC in those units.
- 45 (b) Use of Funds; Maximum Amounts. – Grant funds received by a participating unit
46 pursuant to this section may only be used for the following:
- 47 (1) Annual salary supplements of up to seven thousand five hundred dollars
48 (\$7,500) for each apprentice.
- 49 (2) Annual payments of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each apprentice
50 for the cost of attendance at an eligible educator preparation program,
51 including subject-specific content courses required for licensure at the

1 associated institution of higher education. Grant funds may only be used for
 2 this purpose after the apprentice has exhausted all other scholarships or grants
 3 available for these purposes, including federal Pell grants.

4 (3) Annual salary supplements of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each
 5 apprentice supervisor.

6 (c) Carryforward. – Funds awarded to a participating unit under this section shall not
 7 revert at the end of each fiscal year but shall remain available until October 1 of the subsequent
 8 fiscal year.

9"

10 **SECTION 1.13.(h)** G.S. 115C-269.35(b) reads as rewritten:

11 "(b) Annual Performance Reports. – The State Board shall require all recognized EPPs to
 12 submit annual performance reports. The performance reports shall provide the State Board with
 13 a focused review of the EPPs and the current authorization process in order to ensure that the
 14 programs produce graduates that are well prepared to teach. At a minimum, the annual report
 15 shall contain the following indicators:

16 (1) Performance data from subsection (a) of this section.

17 (2) Data related to the EPP's compliance with requirements for field supervision
 18 of students during their ~~internship and~~ internship, apprenticeship, and
 19 residency experiences.

20 (3) The following information, disaggregated by race, sex, and ethnicity:

21 a. The number of students who apply to candidacy of the EPP.

22 b. The number of students admitted as candidates of the EPP.

23 b1. The number of students working as apprentices pursuant to
 24 G.S. 115C-269.67.

25 c. The number of students completing the program.

26 d. The number of graduates of the EPP licensed in North Carolina.

27 e. The number of graduates of the EPP employed in North Carolina.

28 f. The number and percentage of students who convert from a residency
 29 license to either an initial professional license or a continuing
 30 professional license.

31 g. Any other information required by federal law.

32 ...

33 (8) Percentage of graduates receiving initial professional licenses.

34 (8a) Percentage of graduates who worked as apprentices pursuant to
 35 G.S. 115C-269.67 and received an initial professional license.

36 ...

37 (11) The retention of beginning educators in the profession for at least two years
 38 after licensure in North Carolina.

39 (11a) The retention of beginning educators who also served as apprentices pursuant
 40 to G.S. 115C-269.67 in the profession for at least two years after licensure in
 41 North Carolina.

42 (12) The results of surveys given to school principals that involve evaluation of the
 43 program's effectiveness in preparing participants to succeed in the classroom,
 44 based on experience with employed program participants.

45 (13) Any other information necessary to enable the State Board to assess the
 46 effectiveness of the program on the basis of educator retention and success
 47 criteria adopted by the State Board."

48 **SECTION 1.13.(i)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
 49 of Public Instruction beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year the sum of one million dollars
 50 (\$1,000,000) in recurring funds to be awarded as grants under the TeachReadyNC program
 51 pursuant to G.S. 115C-269.69, as enacted by subsection (g) of this section.

1 **SECTION 1.13.(j)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2026. The Department of
2 Public Instruction shall issue the initial request for applications for the TeachReadyNC Program
3 pursuant to G.S. 115C-269.67, as enacted by subsection (g) of this section, by November 1, 2026,
4 for applications to establish registered teacher apprenticeship programs beginning in the
5 2027-2028 school year. Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-269.67(h), as enacted by subsection (g) of
6 this section, the Department shall provide its initial report on the impact of the TeachReadyNC
7 Program by March 15, 2028.

8 9 **PART II. TRANSFORMING THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

10 11 **COMMUNITY COLLEGE SEAMLESS SKILLS INITIATIVE**

12 **SECTION 2.1.(a)** Initiative Established; Purpose. – There is established the
13 Community College Seamless Skills Initiative (Initiative). The purpose of the Initiative is to
14 create a competency-based education (CBE) model that seamlessly connects high school and
15 community college. By aligning learning experiences from high school with college-level
16 competencies, the Initiative shall enable students to explore career pathways, earn dual credit,
17 and fulfill computer science requirements while gaining credentials of value in high-demand
18 technology employment sectors through college credit.

19 **SECTION 2.1.(b)** Initiative Participants. – Fayetteville Technical Community
20 College (FTCC) and Wilkes Community College (WCC) shall partner to fulfill the commitments
21 of the Initiative.

22 **SECTION 2.1.(c)** Initiative Commitments. – The Initiative shall commit to
23 accomplishing each of the following:

- 24 (1) Establish high-tech pathways that will integrate high school and community
25 college curricula for hands-on, project-based learning.
- 26 (2) Develop competency-based pathways that will create cross-curricular maps
27 for dual credit, fostering seamless transitions between secondary and
28 postsecondary education.
- 29 (3) Scale and replicate to be able to build a scalable framework for rapid
30 implementation across North Carolina.
- 31 (4) Empower student ownership by enabling students to set long-term learning
32 goals and to manage and own their credentials with a digital wallet.
- 33 (5) Facilitate student work experiences to accelerate learning and transition
34 students into work through "learn & earn" work-based learning in partnership
35 with public agencies and private employers.
- 36 (6) Address workforce needs by developing and sustaining a comprehensive
37 talent pipeline of skilled workers for high-demand technology fields in
38 occupations that depend upon informational technology and operational
39 technology for operational success.
- 40 (7) Develop statewide resources, including a guidebook to facilitate model
41 replication and a new talent development model to accelerate learning using
42 CBE.

43 **SECTION 2.1.(d)** Digital Wallet. – The participants in the Initiative shall contract
44 with a vendor to provide a Credential Management System (CrMS) that meets the following
45 criteria:

- 46 (1) Provides the capability to issue, manage, and verify digital credentials across
47 multiple widely adopted open standards, including World Wide Web
48 Consortium (W3C) Verifiable Credentials, OpenBadges, and AnonCredits,
49 within a single platform.
- 50 (2) Supports secure, persistent communication channels that enable
51 authenticated, peer-to-peer interactions between parties.

- 1 (3) Meets or exceeds National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- 2 Identity Assurance Level (IAL) 3 standards for identity proofing to ensure
- 3 high-confidence identity verification.
- 4 (4) Is designed as a decentralized deployment operating as a network appliance
- 5 within the State's controlled cloud environment rather than as a multi-tenant
- 6 Software as a Service (SaaS) offering in order to ensure data sovereignty,
- 7 reduce long-term operational costs, and eliminate dependency on third-party
- 8 hosted infrastructure.
- 9 (5) Includes a non-custodial mobile digital wallet that enables individuals to
- 10 maintain sole control of their credentials.
- 11 (6) Includes configurable, standards-based workflows that extend agency
- 12 processes directly to credential holders.
- 13 (7) Incorporates advanced capabilities for workforce matching, including
- 14 artificial intelligence driven analysis that aligns verified credentials with
- 15 employment opportunities.
- 16 (8) Includes trust and verification systems anchored using blockchain-based
- 17 mechanisms solely for publishing tamper-resistant public keys and service
- 18 endpoints, without storing any personally identifiable information or
- 19 credential data on-chain.

20 **SECTION 2.1.(e)** Support. – The North Carolina Community Colleges System
21 Office shall provide ongoing technical support to community colleges participating in the
22 Initiative. FTCC shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with WCC to jointly co-design
23 the Initiative. As part of this effort, the colleges shall engage an organization with demonstrated
24 expertise in designing and implementing learner-centered, modular, and competency-based high
25 school programs aligned with emerging and high-tech career pathways. The selected
26 organization shall have a history of co-designing stackable credentials with public school units
27 and postsecondary institutions and a proven track record of building digital infrastructure that
28 supports student-paced progression, interdisciplinary instruction, and authentic skill
29 development. The organization shall assist in the development of a comprehensive framework
30 for the Initiative, including course design, sequencing, credentialing structure, and related
31 elements necessary to support personalized student progression during the 2026-2027 school
32 year.

33 **SECTION 2.1.(f)** Funding. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
34 North Carolina Community Colleges System Office the sum of three million seven hundred fifty
35 thousand dollars (\$3,750,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be allocated
36 to FTCC and WCC for the purposes outlined in this section. Of the funds appropriated in this
37 section, the sum of up to two million seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$2,750,000) shall be
38 allocated to FTCC and the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) shall be allocated to WCC.
39 Funds allocated for the purposes outlined in this section shall not revert but shall remain available
40 until the end of the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

41 42 **COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL AND HEALTHCARE AND HIGH-TECH** 43 **PATHWAYS PROGRAM**

44 **SECTION 2.2.(a)** Program Established; Purpose. – There is established the
45 Competency-Based High School and Healthcare and High-Tech Pathways Program (Program).
46 The purpose of the Program is to create pathways that will utilize competency-based education
47 (CBE). Pathways will result in obtaining either an associate degree or an industry recognized
48 credential/certification/licensure based on the student's goal of employment or enrollment.
49 Students will decide their college or career track at the end of their junior year with an initial
50 emphasis on healthcare preparation.

1 **SECTION 2.2.(b)** Participants. – Mooresville Graded School District (MGSD) shall
2 partner with Mitchell Community College (MCC) to implement the Program.

3 **SECTION 2.2.(c)** Program Time Line. – MGSD, in collaboration with MCC, shall
4 contract with an organization with demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing
5 learner-centered, modular, and competency-based high school programs that align with emerging
6 healthcare and high-tech career pathways. The organization shall have experience in
7 co-designing stackable credentials with public school units and higher education partners and a
8 documented track record of developing digital infrastructure that supports student-paced
9 progression, interdisciplinary learning, and real-world skill acquisition. This organization shall
10 assist in developing a framework for the Program, including course design, sequencing,
11 credentialing structure, and other elements necessary for personalized student progression during
12 the 2026-2027 school year. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a pathway
13 provided by the Program by the 2028-2029 school year at the latest.

14 **SECTION 2.2.(d)** Program Flexibilities. – Notwithstanding any provision of law to
15 the contrary, the following flexibilities shall be available to Program participants:

- 16 (1) MGSD may offer Credit by Demonstrated Mastery assessments and CTE
17 Proof of Learning assessments outside of existing State testing windows.
- 18 (2) MCC may enroll MGSD students in community college courses prior to their
19 eleventh grade year without the student meeting the requirements for ninth
20 and tenth grade students pursuant to subdivision (4) of G.S. 115D-20.
- 21 (3) Students participating in the Program shall have access to all community
22 college courses at MCC, regardless of pathway selection.
- 23 (4) MGSD may replace any high school graduation credit requirement, except
24 those outlined in this subdivision, with either community college courses
25 offered by MCC or locally developed CBE courses that are consistent with
26 the student's pathway. MGSD shall not replace any graduation credit
27 requirements in the following subject areas:
 - 28 a. English.
 - 29 b. Mathematics.
 - 30 c. Science.
 - 31 d. Social Studies.
- 32 (5) MGSD may operate any high school in the local school administrative unit
33 consistent with the flexibilities of a school operating under a restart model
34 pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.37B(a)(2).

35 **SECTION 2.2.(e)** Selection of Third-Party Vendor. – MGSD shall select a
36 third-party vendor (Vendor) that is an educational support provider with a nationally recognized,
37 research-based instructional and leadership framework, including a High Reliability School
38 model, a taxonomy of educational objectives aligned to classroom strategies, and a system for
39 implementing personalized competency-based education. The Vendor shall have published
40 extensively in peer-reviewed and practitioner literature, have an established track record of
41 working directly with K-12 schools and districts across multiple states, and offer professional
42 development services, implementation support, and instructional resources developed and led by
43 a founding education researcher with over four decades of influence in curriculum, instruction,
44 and assessment.

45 **SECTION 2.2.(f)** MGSD Partnership with Vendor. – MGSD shall partner with the
46 Vendor selected pursuant to subsection (e) of this section to develop standards-aligned
47 proficiency scales for all content areas in grades nine through 12 to ensure educators in the
48 participating schools have the tools necessary to successfully transition to CBE approaches. The
49 Vendor shall provide professional development and coaching to the schools in MGSD to ensure
50 educators can engage in learning about CBE approaches, including implementation of the
51 proficiency scales developed by MGSD.

1 **SECTION 2.2.(g)** Funding. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
2 Department of Public Instruction the sum of four million dollars (\$4,000,000) in nonrecurring
3 funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. These funds shall not revert but shall remain available until
4 the end of the 2028-2029 fiscal year. These funds shall be allocated to MGSD for the following
5 purposes:

- 6 (1) To contract with experts in CBE and designing stackable credentials pursuant
7 to subsection (c) of this section.
- 8 (2) To hire one additional staff member at MGSD to oversee implementation of
9 the Program.
- 10 (3) To partner with a Vendor pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.

11 12 **LIGHTHOUSE MATH PROJECT**

13 **SECTION 2.3.(a)** Project Established; Purpose. – There is established the
14 Lighthouse Math Project (Project). The purpose of the Project is to increase the percentage of
15 high school students who are (i) eligible to complete college level mathematics upon graduation
16 from high school and (ii) able to complete college level math either through dual enrollment
17 while in high school or within the first year of college enrollment.

18 **SECTION 2.3.(b)** Project Participants. – Wake Technical Community College
19 (Wake Tech) shall partner with Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) for high school
20 students at East Wake High School and Knightdale High School to be eligible to participate in
21 the Project at the Wake Tech East campus of Wake Tech. Wake Tech and WCPSS shall partner
22 with SparkNC to align the Project participants' ongoing efforts at the Wake Tech East campus
23 with the design and implementation of the Project.

24 **SECTION 2.3.(c)** Project Commitments. – WCPSS, in collaboration with Wake
25 Tech, shall contract with Khan Academy, Inc., (Khan) for use of the artificial intelligence student
26 tutoring program, Khanmigo. Students enrolling at participating high schools shall have access
27 to Khanmigo from the time of enrollment in the high school and continuing through their
28 attendance at Wake Tech if the student chooses to enroll at Wake Tech East. Wake Tech shall
29 collaborate with Khan to do the following:

- 30 (1) Develop and deliver at least one Khanmigo-centered gateway college math
31 course to be offered to high school students at participating high schools to be
32 completed as a college level math course. This course shall also be available
33 to students who graduate from participating high schools and enroll in the
34 courses at Wake Tech East.
- 35 (2) Develop a Khanmigo-centered developmental math course sequence that will
36 be provided by Wake Tech faculty to students from participating high schools
37 in one of the following formats:
 - 38 a. As part of a Career and College Promise Career Ready Pathway.
 - 39 b. As supplement to a Career and College Promise Pathway.
 - 40 c. As a summer bridge program available to students prior to or
41 subsequent to their junior and senior years of high school.
 - 42 d. As a community college course during the first semester of enrollment
43 at Wake Tech.

44 **SECTION 2.3.(d)** Modular Math Course. – As part of the Project, Khan, in
45 consultation with Wake Tech and WCPSS, shall work to develop a self-paced, competency-based
46 modular math course with appropriate student diagnostics and student assessments based on the
47 college readiness math competencies provided as part of the Project. It is the intent that students
48 successfully demonstrating college readiness math competencies will be eligible to enroll in
49 college level math courses.

50 **SECTION 2.3.(e)** Funding; DPI. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to
51 the Department of Public Instruction the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in

1 nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to contract with Khan for licenses for the
2 Khanmigo application and to create the course developed pursuant to subdivision (1) of
3 subsection (c) of this section. Funds appropriated for the purposes laid out in this section shall
4 not revert but shall remain available to accomplish the purposes of this section until the end of
5 the 2027-2028 fiscal year.

6 **SECTION 2.3.(f) Funding; NCCCS.** – There is appropriated from the General Fund
7 to the Community Colleges System Office the sum of up to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in
8 nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to establish time-limited positions at
9 Wake Tech. Two positions shall be assigned to work in each participating high school to assist
10 in the implementation of the courses offered by the Project. Funds appropriated for the purposes
11 laid out in this section shall not revert but shall remain available to accomplish the purposes of
12 this section until the end of the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

13 14 **COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION AND HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN** 15 **STRATEGIC NETWORK**

16 **SECTION 2.4.** Mooresville Graded School District, Mitchell Community College,
17 Wake Technical Community College, Wake County Public School System, Fayetteville
18 Technical Community College, Wilkes Community College, and SparkNC shall collaborate to
19 create a Competency-Based Education and High School Redesign Strategic Network (Network).
20 The president of SparkNC, or the president's designee, shall serve as the chair of the Network.
21 The chair shall coordinate the operations of the Network and provide administrative and technical
22 support for the Network to the extent such support is necessary. The Network shall provide a
23 means for each entity to share what it has learned and developed regarding CBE and high school
24 redesign. The goals of the Network shall be to advance the goals of developing a CBE approach
25 to education across the State.

26 27 **COMPETENCY-BASED INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM**

28 **SECTION 2.5.(a) Program Established; Purpose.** – There is established the North
29 Carolina Competency-Based Education Innovation Grant and Network Program (Program). The
30 purpose of the Program is to provide funding and support to schools and districts to support the
31 transition to competency-based education (CBE) models that focus on mastery of learning rather
32 than instructional time. The grant aims to promote innovative instructional practices, flexible
33 assessment models, and systemic shifts to ensure all students progress based on demonstrated
34 proficiency.

35 **SECTION 2.5.(b) Program Objectives.** – The objectives of the Program are as
36 follows:

- 37 (1) Redesign Learning Pathways. – Support schools and districts in developing
38 personalized CBE models that allow students to progress at their own pace.
- 39 (2) Assessment Innovation. – Utilize formative and performance-based
40 assessments that measure student mastery of skills and knowledge, including
41 the use of AI learning tools.
- 42 (3) Educator Capacity Building. – Provide common professional development for
43 educators on instructional strategies and assessment practices aligned with
44 transitioning to CBE.
- 45 (4) Develop Strategies for Statewide Scaling and Best Practices. – Develop and
46 share resources, implementation strategies, and lessons learned to expand
47 CBE across North Carolina.

48 **SECTION 2.5.(c) Phase One.** – The first phase of the Program shall begin with the
49 2026-2027 school year and continue until the conclusion of the 2029-2030 school year. Public
50 school units shall submit applications and complete any planning or organizational duties during

1 the 2026-2027 school year with implementation of CBE in participating schools beginning with
2 the 2027-2028 school year.

3 **SECTION 2.5.(d) Application.** – The Department of Public Instruction shall create
4 an application for the Program and make the application available to all public school units no
5 later than 60 days after this act becomes law. Public school units shall submit their applications
6 to the Department no later than 60 days after the application becomes available. The Department
7 shall select 10 schools to participate in the Program no later than 60 days after the close of the
8 application period. When selecting schools to participate in the Program, the Department shall
9 prioritize schools that show a strong commitment to implementing CBE and innovation in
10 assessment. The Department shall develop criteria to determine which schools are most ready to
11 transition to CBE. The application shall include at least the following:

- 12 (1) A comprehensive plan outlining the school's vision for competency-based
13 education.
- 14 (2) A description of instructional and assessment shifts to be implemented.
- 15 (3) A budget for use of grant funds and a sustainability plan to continue utilizing
16 CBE after the conclusion of Phase One.
- 17 (4) Commitments from public school units leadership and stakeholders.

18 **SECTION 2.5.(e) Grant Funds; Use; Training.** – Grant awards shall be in the amount
19 of three hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$330,000) to each participating school. Participating
20 schools shall use the sum of ninety-five thousand dollars (\$95,000) each school year to receive
21 training on the implementation of CBE in the school. The remaining grant funds shall be used
22 for costs associated with the transition to CBE, including travel costs and CBE resources. Grant
23 funds shall remain available until the end of the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

24 **SECTION 2.5.(f) Selection of Third-Party Vendor.** – The Department shall select a
25 third-party vendor (Vendor) that is an educational support provider with a nationally recognized,
26 research-based instructional and leadership framework, including a High Reliability School
27 model, a taxonomy of educational objectives aligned to classroom strategies, and a system for
28 implementing personalized competency-based education. The provider must have published
29 extensively in peer-reviewed and practitioner literature, have an established track record of
30 working directly with K–12 schools and districts across multiple states, and offer professional
31 development services, implementation support, and instructional resources developed and led by
32 a founding education researcher with over four decades of influence in curriculum, instruction,
33 and assessment.

34 **SECTION 2.5.(g) Department Partnership with Vendor.** – The Department shall
35 partner with the Vendor selected pursuant to subsection (f) of this section to develop publicly
36 available, standards-aligned proficiency scales for all content areas and grade levels to ensure
37 educators in the participating schools have the tools necessary to successfully transition to CBE
38 approaches. The Vendor shall provide annual professional development events throughout the
39 regions of the State to ensure educators can engage in learning about CBE approaches, including
40 implementation of the proficiency scales developed by the Department.

41 **SECTION 2.5.(h) Department Duties.** – The Department of Public Instruction shall
42 do the following as part of the Program:

- 43 (1) Develop, in collaboration with the Vendor, a CBE Network to support the
44 long-term transition to CBE. The CBE Network shall do the following:
 - 45 a. Provide strategic guidance and policy recommendations for scaling
46 CBE statewide.
 - 47 b. Facilitate collaboration among grant recipients, educators,
48 policymakers, and CBE industrial leaders.
 - 49 c. Develop a long-term roadmap for CBE implementation statewide.
 - 50 d. Offer professional learning communities and shared online resources
51 to support ongoing innovation and capacity building.

- e. Develop methods of measuring proficiency for all courses offered as part of the standard course of study in kindergarten through grade 12, with support from the Vendor.
- f. Disseminate developed proficiency measures to all public school units and post standards developed to align with the proficiency measures online on a publicly accessible website.
- g. Conduct research and evaluation to inform best practices and continuous improvement in participating schools.

- (2) Provide support and technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, and access to the CBE network for all grant recipients.

SECTION 2.5.(i) Reporting; Participants. – Each participating school shall submit a quarterly progress report to the Department detailing implementation of CBE in the school. The Department shall establish the due dates and mechanism for the submission of the progress reports. Progress shall include available student learning outcome data, including evidence of progress toward content mastery.

SECTION 2.5.(j) Reporting; Department. – The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a final report on the outcomes of Phase One of the Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 1, 2030. The report shall include the following:

- (1) A summary of student outcomes reported by participating schools.
- (2) Any challenges experienced by participating schools or the Department with implementation of the Program.
- (3) Recommendations for scaling the Program statewide.
- (4) Any other information the Department deems relevant.
- (5) Any information requested by the Committee.

SECTION 2.5.(k) Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of five million three hundred thousand dollars (\$5,300,000) in nonrecurring funds to implement the provisions of this section. Funds appropriated in this section shall not revert but shall remain available until the end of the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

OFFICE OF LEARNING RESEARCH EVALUATION

SECTION 2.6.(a) Study and Evaluation. – The Office of Learning Research at the North Carolina Collaboratory shall study and evaluate the programs and initiatives established pursuant to this Part and report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 15, 2028, and annually thereafter, culminating in a final report on March 15, 2031. Reports shall include at least the following:

- (1) The total number of students engaging with these programs.
- (2) The total amount of funds expended to implement, design, and operate the programs.
- (3) Effects on student achievement and learning outcomes.

SECTION 2.6.(b) Funding. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina the sum of four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be allocated to the North Carolina Collaboratory for the Office of Learning Research to conduct the study and evaluation required by this section.

PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 3. Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes effective July 1, 2026.