

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001

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SENATE BILL 898  
Second Edition Engrossed 4/12/01  
House Committee Substitute Favorable 6/4/01  
Fourth Edition Engrossed 6/7/01  
Fifth Edition Engrossed 6/12/01

Short Title: The Student Citizen Act of 2001.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 5, 2001

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE STUDENT CITIZEN ACT OF 2001.

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 SECTION 1. This act shall be known as the "Student Citizenship Act of  
5 2001".

6 SECTION 2. G.S. 115C-81 reads as rewritten:

7 "§ 115C-81. Basic Education Program.

8 ...

9 (g1) Modifications to the social studies curriculum to instruct students on  
10 participation in the democratic process and to give them hands-on experience in  
11 participating in the democratic process:

12 (1) The State Board of Education shall modify the high school social  
13 studies curriculum to include instruction in civic and citizenship  
14 education. The State Board of Education is strongly encouraged to  
15 include, at a minimum, the following components in the high school  
16 civic and citizenship education curriculum:

17 a. A requirement that students write to a local, State, or federal  
18 elected official about an issue that is important to them;

19 b. Instruction on the importance of voting and otherwise  
20 participating in the democratic process;

21 c. Information about current events and governmental structure;  
22 and

23 d. Information about the democratic process and how laws are  
24 made.

25 (2) The State Board of Education shall modify the middle school social  
26 studies curriculum to include instruction in civic and citizenship

1 education. The State Board of Education is strongly encouraged to  
2 include, at a minimum, the following components in the middle school  
3 civic and citizenship education curriculum:

4 a. A tour of representative local government facilities such as the  
5 local jail, the courthouse, or a town hall, to help students  
6 understand the way their community is governed;

7 b. A requirement that students choose and analyze a community  
8 problem and offer public policy recommendations on the  
9 problem to local officials; and

10 c. Information about getting involved in community groups.

11 (h) ~~Character Education. – Local boards of education may require the teaching~~  
12 ~~of the following character traits in the public schools: Each local board of education~~  
13 shall develop and implement character education instruction with input from the local  
14 community. The instruction shall be incorporated into the standard curriculum and  
15 should address the following traits:

16 (1) Courage. – Having the determination to do the right thing even when  
17 others don't and the strength to follow your conscience rather than the  
18 crowd; and attempting difficult things that are worthwhile.

19 (2) Good judgment. – Choosing worthy goals and setting proper priorities;  
20 thinking through the consequences of your actions; and basing  
21 decisions on practical wisdom and good sense.

22 (3) Integrity. – Having the inner strength to be truthful, trustworthy, and  
23 honest in all things; acting justly and honorably.

24 (4) Kindness. – Being considerate, courteous, helpful, and understanding  
25 of others; showing care, compassion, friendship, and generosity; and  
26 treating others as you would like to be treated.

27 (5) Perseverance. – Being persistent in the pursuit of worthy objectives in  
28 spite of difficulty, opposition, or discouragement; and exhibiting  
29 patience and having the fortitude to try again when confronted with  
30 delays, mistakes, or failures.

31 (6) Respect. – Showing high regard for authority, for other people, for  
32 self, for property, and for country; and understanding that all people  
33 have value as human beings.

34 (7) Responsibility. – Being dependable in carrying out obligations and  
35 duties; showing reliability and consistency in words and conduct;  
36 being accountable for your own actions; and being committed to active  
37 involvement in your community.

38 (8) Self-Discipline. – Demonstrating hard work and commitment to  
39 purpose; regulating yourself for improvement and restraining from  
40 inappropriate behaviors; being in proper control of your words,  
41 actions, impulses, and desires; choosing abstinence from premarital

1 sex, drugs, alcohol, and other harmful substances and behaviors; and  
2 doing your best in all situations.

3 (h1) In addition to the instruction under subsection (h) of this section, local boards  
4 of education are encouraged to include instruction on the following responsibilities:

5 (1) Respect for school personnel. – In the school environment, respect  
6 includes holding teachers, school administrators, and all school  
7 personnel in high esteem and demonstrating in words and deeds that  
8 all school personnel deserve to be treated with courtesy and proper  
9 deference.

10 (2) Responsibility for school safety. – Helping to create a harmonious  
11 school atmosphere that is free from threats, weapons, and violent or  
12 disruptive behavior; cultivate an orderly learning environment in  
13 which students and school personnel feel safe and secure; and  
14 encourage the resolution of conflicts and disagreements through  
15 peaceful means including peer mediation.

16 (3) Service to others. – Engaging in meaningful service to their schools  
17 and their communities. Schools may teach service-learning by (i)  
18 incorporating it into their standard curriculum, or (ii) involving a  
19 classroom of students or some other group of students, on a voluntary  
20 basis, in one or more hands-on community-service projects.

21 (4) Good citizenship. – Obeying the laws of the nation and this State;  
22 abiding by school rules; and understanding the rights and  
23 responsibilities of a member of a republic."

24 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-81(g) is amended by adding a new subdivision to

25 read:

26 "(3b) An object containing the words of the Ten Commandments may be  
27 displayed on real property owned by a local school administrative unit  
28 along with other documents of historical significance that have formed  
29 and influenced the United States legal or governmental system. The  
30 display of an object containing the words of the Ten Commandments  
31 shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other  
32 documents and objects displayed and shall not be presented or  
33 displayed in any fashion that results in calling attention to it apart from  
34 the other displayed documents and objects."

35 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

36 "(39) To Adopt Dress Code and Appearance Policies for Students and Public  
37 School Employees. – The State of North Carolina respects a student's  
38 right to choose his or her style of dress or appearance. Local boards of  
39 education shall adopt dress code and appearance policies that require  
40 students to adhere to standards of dress that are compatible with the  
41 requirement of a good school environment. Such a policy shall provide  
42 that if a student's dress is such that it disrupts the learning environment

1 or constitutes a threat to health or safety, the principal or the principal's  
2 designee may require the student and student's parent or guardian to  
3 take appropriate action to remedy the situation. Principals shall  
4 maintain guidelines to implement the student dress code and  
5 appearance policy, copies of which shall be made available to parents  
6 and students.

7 Local boards of education shall adopt dress code and appearance  
8 policies that require public school employees to adhere to standards of  
9 dress that are compatible with the requirement of a good school  
10 environment. Such a policy shall provide that if a public school  
11 employee's dress is such that it disrupts the learning environment or  
12 constitutes a threat to health or safety, the principal or the principal's  
13 designee may require the employee to take appropriate action to  
14 remedy the situation. Principals shall maintain guidelines to implement  
15 the employee dress code and appearance policy, copies of which shall  
16 be made available to all public school employees."

17 **SECTION 5.** If any provision of this act is declared unconstitutional or  
18 invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of this act as a whole or any part  
19 other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

20 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2001, except that:

- 21 (1) The State Board of Education shall complete the modifications to the  
22 social studies curriculum required by G.S. 115C-81(g1), as enacted in  
23 Section 2 of this act, prior to October 1, 2001. The modified  
24 curriculum shall be implemented beginning with the 2002-2003 school  
25 year.
- 26 (2) Local boards of education shall develop character education  
27 instruction in accordance with G.S. 115C-81(h), as rewritten by  
28 Section 2 of this act, prior to January 1, 2002, and shall implement this  
29 instruction beginning with the 2002-2003 school year. If a local board  
30 determines that it would be an economic hardship to begin to  
31 implement character education instruction by the beginning of the  
32 2002-2003 school year, the board may request an extension of time  
33 from the State Board of Education. The local board shall submit the  
34 request for an extension to the State Board on or before April 1, 2002.  
35 Local boards are encouraged to include in their character education  
36 instruction the responsibilities listed in G.S. 115C-81(h1) of Section 2  
37 of this act.
- 38 (3) Section 4 of this act applies beginning on January 1, 2002.