

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2007**

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**HOUSE BILL 452**

Short Title: Dropout Study.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Representatives Parmon, Wright, Fisher, Bell (Primary Sponsors); Alexander, Bryant, Carney, Dickson, Earle, Faison, Farmer-Butterfield, Glazier, Harrison, Hurley, Insko, Luebke, McLawhorn, Pierce, Rapp, Saunders, Steen, Thomas, Wainwright, Walker, Weiss, Womble, and Wray.

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

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March 5, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT A RECOMMENDATION OF THE HOUSE SELECT  
2 STUDY COMMITTEE ON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DROPOUT  
3 RATES TO ESTABLISH THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE ON  
4 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES.  
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6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is created the Joint Legislative Study Committee on  
8 High School Graduation and Dropout Rates. The Committee shall consist of 16  
9 members. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint eight members  
10 and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint eight members.

11 The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint a cochair, and the  
12 President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint a cochair for the Committee. The  
13 Committee may meet at any time upon the joint call of the cochairs. Vacancies on the  
14 Committee shall be filled by the same appointing authority as made the initial  
15 appointment.

16 The Committee, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all  
17 powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4. The  
18 Committee may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by  
19 G.S. 120-32.02.

20 Subject to the approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the  
21 Committee may meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building. The  
22 Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign  
23 professional staff to assist the Committee in its work. The House of Representatives'  
24 and the Senate's Supervisors of Clerks shall assign clerical support staff to the  
25 Committee, and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the

1 Committee. Members of the Committee shall receive subsistence and travel expenses at  
2 the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

3 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Committee shall study the need to raise the compulsory  
4 school attendance age, methods for increasing the high school cohort graduation rate,  
5 and methods for lowering the dropout rate. In connection with this study, the Committee  
6 may consider and report on:

- 7 (1) The impact of dropping out on the student;
- 8 (2) The capacity of a 16-year-old to understand the social and economic  
9 consequences of dropping out of school;
- 10 (3) The emergence of major high school reform efforts, including Learn  
11 and Earn Programs, the New Schools Initiative, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
12 Schools, and the impact they may have on teenagers who remain in  
13 school longer;
- 14 (4) The importance to the entire State of every student leaving high school  
15 prepared to enter the workforce or succeed in higher education;
- 16 (5) Research on factors related to students' success or lack of success in  
17 schools;
- 18 (6) Strategies, programs, and support services that should be provided if  
19 the compulsory school attendance age is raised to enable students to  
20 graduate from high school, and time lines for implementing those  
21 strategies, programs, and support services;
- 22 (7) Related laws and policies that must be addressed to ensure the  
23 availability of support services for students;
- 24 (8) The fiscal impact of raising the compulsory attendance age;
- 25 (9) Possible exemptions from the law for certain students; including those  
26 students who fulfill their graduation requirements early and receive a  
27 diploma, complete an alternative education program, or whose parents  
28 consent to their leaving school before they graduate or reach the  
29 maximum compulsory school attendance age;
- 30 (10) The fiscal impact of raising the compulsory school attendance age on  
31 the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and  
32 the Department of Correction;
- 33 (11) The law in other states and the experience of other states that have  
34 raised the compulsory school attendance age;
- 35 (12) Input from school personnel and from dropouts and students at risk of  
36 dropping out on the issue;
- 37 (13) Any changes that are needed to the definition of a dropout and any  
38 changes in data collection to ensure consistency and accuracy in  
39 reporting the dropout rate;
- 40 (14) Proven strategies and early intervention programs that can be  
41 implemented to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out, especially in  
42 the middle grades;
- 43 (15) Data on the number and demographics of students who drop out before  
44 the 9<sup>th</sup> grade;

1           (16) The importance of requiring every student to meet with a professional  
2           counselor for an exit interview to find out why students are dropping  
3           out; and

4           (17) The importance of making sure that at-risk students are counseled  
5           about all of the support services, including alternative schools and  
6           extra assistance, that are available to help them meet their graduation  
7           requirements.

8           **SECTION 1.(c)** The Committee shall submit a report of its findings and  
9           recommendations, including any legislative recommendations, to the 2008 Regular  
10          Session of the 2007 General Assembly or to the 2009 General Assembly upon its  
11          convening. The Committee shall terminate on the convening of the 2009 General  
12          Assembly.

13          **SECTION 1.(d)** Of the funds appropriated to the General Assembly, the  
14          Legislative Services Commission shall allocate funds for the expenses of the Committee  
15          established by this section.

16          **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.