

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

S

1

SENATE BILL 321\*

Short Title: Encourage Policies to Facilitate Graduation. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Malone; Apodaca, Atwater, Berger of Franklin, Davis, Foriest, Graham, Jones, McKissick, Nesbitt, Purcell, Snow, Stevens, and Tillman.

Referred to: Education/Higher Education.

February 26, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT POLICIES  
2 TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL BUSINESSES TO ADOPT PERSONNEL POLICIES TO  
3 PERMIT PARENTS TO ATTEND STUDENT CONFERENCES, IMPLEMENT  
4 PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST STUDENTS IN MAKING A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION  
5 BETWEEN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, INCREASE  
6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, REDUCE  
7 SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION RATES AND ENCOURAGE ACADEMIC  
8 PROGRESS DURING SUSPENSIONS, AND PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT  
9 TO ENCOURAGE PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS TO GRADUATE, AS  
10 RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON DROPOUT  
11 PREVENTION AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

12 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

13 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 115C-47(34) is amended to read:

14 "(34) To Encourage the Business Community to Facilitate Student Achievement. –  
15 Local boards of education, in consultation with local business leaders, shall  
16 develop voluntary guidelines relating to after-school employment. The  
17 guidelines may include an agreement to limit the number of hours a student  
18 may work or to tie the number of hours a student may work to his academic  
19 performance, school attendance, and economic need. The General Assembly  
20 finds that local boards of education do not currently have information  
21 regarding how many of their students are employed after school and how  
22 many hours they work; the General Assembly urges local boards of  
23 education to compile this critical information so that the State can determine  
24 to what extent these students' work affects their school performance.

25 Local boards of education shall work with local business ~~leaders~~ leaders,  
26 including local chambers of commerce, to encourage employers to include  
27 and adopt as part of their stated personnel policies time for employees who  
28 are ~~provide~~ parents or guardians ~~with time~~ to attend conferences with their  
29 children's teachers.

30 The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide guidance and  
31 technical assistance to the local boards of education on carrying out the  
32 provisions of this subdivision."  
33

34 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding the following new subdivisions

35 to read:



1           "(53) To Encourage Programs for Successful Transition Between the Middle  
2           School and High School Years. – Local boards of education are encouraged  
3           to adopt policies to implement programs that assist students in making a  
4           successful transition between the middle school and high school years. The  
5           programs may include Ninth Grade Academies, programs to effectively  
6           prepare eighth grade students for the expectations and rigors of high school,  
7           early warning systems to flag students not ready for ninth grade and develop  
8           plans for those students, mentoring programs that pair upperclassmen with  
9           incoming students; and graduation plans for students who have fallen behind  
10           and are off-track for graduation.

11           (54) To Increase Parental Involvement in Student Achievement and Graduation  
12           Preparation. – Local boards of education are encouraged to adopt policies to  
13           promote and support parental involvement in student learning and  
14           achievement at school and at home and to encourage successful progress  
15           toward graduation. These policies may include strategies to increase school  
16           communications with parents regarding expectations for students, graduation  
17           requirements, and available course offerings, to provide increased  
18           opportunities for parental involvement in schools, and to create an  
19           environment in the schools conducive for parental involvement.

20           (55) To Reduce Suspension and Expulsion Rates and Provide for Academic  
21           Progress During Suspensions. – Local boards of education are encouraged to  
22           adopt policies and best practices to reduce short and long-term suspension  
23           and expulsion rates and to provide alternative learning programs for  
24           continued academic progress for students who are short- and long-term  
25           suspended."

26           **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-375.5(b) is amended to read:

27           "(b) Local boards of education shall adopt a policy to ensure that pregnant and parenting  
28 students are not discriminated against or excluded from school or any program, class, or  
29 extracurricular activity because they are pregnant or parenting ~~students.~~ student and to provide  
30 assistance and support to encourage pregnant and parenting students to remain enrolled in  
31 school and graduate. The policy shall include, at a minimum, all of the following:

- 32           (1) Local school administrative units shall use, as needed, supplemental funds  
33 from the At-Risk Student Services allotment to support programs for  
34 pregnant and parenting students.
- 35           (2) Notwithstanding Part 1 of Article 26 of this Chapter, pregnant and parenting  
36 students shall be given excused absences from school for pregnancy and  
37 related conditions for the length of time the student's physician finds  
38 medically necessary. This includes absences due to the illness or medical  
39 appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the  
40 custodial parent.
- 41           (3) Homework and make-up work shall be made available to pregnant and  
42 parenting students to ensure that they have the opportunity to keep current  
43 with assignments and avoid losing course credit because of their absence  
44 from school and, to the extent necessary, a homebound teacher shall be  
45 assigned."

46           **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law.