

cooperate in creating curricula that facilitate interested students in achieving that goal; and

Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes that it is in the best interests of the State to encourage qualified high school students to take community college general education courses while they are still in high school; and

Whereas, to help accomplish this goal, it is the intent of the General Assembly to offer incentives to community colleges that develop and offer appropriate general education courses and technical and vocational courses to qualified high school students; and

Whereas, it is the intent of the General Assembly that the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges cooperate on offering appropriate courses to qualified high school students and on encouraging and accommodating students in doing so; and

Whereas, it is more economical and a better use of State funds to provide general education courses to interested and eligible students through the community college system where the cost per FTE is \$3,500 rather than the university system where the cost is \$9,550; and

Whereas, it will increase the college-going rate in the State if students graduate from high school with a head start on their college education; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. (a) A community college that serves at least 10 percentage points more than the statewide average of cooperative program students served may carry forward from its General Fund current operations appropriations credit balance remaining at the end of the fiscal year an amount equal to one-half of one percent (.5%) of its General Fund operating appropriation for the fiscal year. These funds may be used for nonrecurring expenses.

A community college that meets the criteria in this subsection shall also receive priority for allocations from the State Board Reserve Fund.

(b) A community college shall receive one hundred twenty-five percent (125%) of the full-time equivalent students (FTE) earned for qualified high school students who attend college transfer courses at community colleges. A community college shall receive one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the full-time equivalent students (FTE) earned for qualified high school students who attend technical or vocational courses at community colleges. The State Board of Community Colleges' other guidelines for determining FTE enrollment and the policies of the Cooperative Program Manual apply to the courses offered and to the computation of FTE under this section.

(c) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Community Colleges the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 1998-99 fiscal year. These funds shall be used as incentive grants to encourage institutions to start up new classes for qualified high school students.

(d) The State Board of Community Colleges shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 1, 1999, regarding the implementation of this act.

1 Section 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 1998.