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Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 16, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH SCHOOL EXTENSION LEARNING RECOVERY AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS IN EACH LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON AT-RISK STUDENTS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. SCHOOL EXTENSION LEARNING RECOVERY AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

SECTION 1.1. Program Established; Purpose. – Notwithstanding Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes or any other provision of law, following the end of the 2020-2021 school year, within funds available, including federal funds received by a local school administrative unit for the purpose of responding to the impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), each local school administrative unit shall offer a school extension learning recovery and enrichment program (program) outside of the instructional school calendar. The purpose of the program shall be to provide in-person instruction on specific subjects, as well as offer additional enrichment activities, to students in kindergarten through grade 12 to address learning losses and negative impacts students have experienced due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year. Each local school administrative unit shall identify and prioritize at-risk students, consistent with G.S. 115C-105.41(a), for participation in the program. Students who are not identified as at-risk under G.S. 115C-105.41(a) may also participate in a program within space available. A year-round school, as defined in G.S. 115C-84.2(f)(5), may offer the program during vacation periods in the instructional calendar through October 1, 2021.

SECTION 1.2. Program Plan; Requirements. – Each local school administrative unit shall develop and submit a plan for its program that meets the requirements of this act to the Department of Public Instruction no later than 30 days prior to the final instructional day of the 2020-2021 school year. The Department shall notify the local school administrative unit of any necessary changes and approve the program plan with those changes within 21 days of receiving the plan from a local school administrative unit. A charter school is also encouraged to submit a plan that meets the requirements of this section depending on the grade levels served by the school to offer a program consistent with this act. The program shall be separate and apart from the 2020-2021 school year and shall not be an extension of the 2020-2021 school year. The plan shall include at least the following as components of the program:



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- 1 (1) Instruction shall be delivered for at least 150 hours or 30 days over the course
2 of the program as follows:
- 3 a. The instructional time shall not include the time for lunch service,
4 transition periods, and the physical activity period as required by this
5 section.
- 6 b. Instruction shall not be delivered on Saturdays.
- 7 (2) Meal service for each instructional day.
- 8 (3) A period of physical activity during the instructional day.
- 9 (4) Grade level course offerings and activities in the following:
- 10 a. For students in kindergarten through third grade, in-person instruction
11 in the following:
- 12 1. Reading and math, in addition to science instruction for third
13 grade students.
- 14 2. Integration of the local school administrative unit's reading
15 camp, as defined in G.S. 115C-83.3(4a), into the program.
- 16 3. At least one enrichment activity. The local school
17 administrative unit shall have discretion in the type of
18 enrichment activity offered, such as a sports, music, or arts
19 program.
- 20 b. For students in fourth through eighth grade, in-person instruction in
21 the following:
- 22 1. Reading, math, and science.
- 23 2. At least one enrichment activity. The local school
24 administrative unit shall have discretion in the type of
25 enrichment activity offered, such as a sports, music, or arts
26 program.
- 27 c. For high school students:
- 28 1. In-person instruction in end-of-course subjects.
- 29 2. Access to modules and teacher support for credit recovery
30 courses necessary to meet graduation requirements, including
31 courses offered through the North Carolina Virtual Public
32 School (NCVPS).
- 33 3. In-person instruction for an elective course.
- 34 (5) Transportation services to the school facility housing the program, provided
35 in accordance with the Plan A requirements for transportation established in
36 the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12) issued on March 24, 2021.
- 37 (5a) Time built into the instructional day for teachers to provide individual or small
38 group instruction to at-risk students.
- 39 (5b) In-person social-emotional learning supports for all students in the program.
- 40 (6) Voluntary participation by at-risk students in the program. Each local school
41 administrative unit shall notify parents of students identified as at-risk,
42 pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.41(a), and the student's eligibility for participation
43 in the program. Parents of students who qualify for the program shall make
44 the final decision regarding student attendance at the program. However, for
45 students who do attend the program, the following shall apply:
- 46 a. Kindergarten students who participate in the program shall be exempt
47 from retention for the 2021-2022 school year. At the end of the
48 program, if necessary, a supplemental support plan shall be developed
49 for the student's first grade year.

1 b. For all other students who were retained for the 2021-2022 school
2 year, the student's principal shall reassess the student's promotion
3 eligibility upon completion of the program.

4 (7) Opportunity for additional students to participate, within the space available,
5 after students are prioritized for attendance in the program under subdivision
6 (6) of this section. The local school administrative unit shall establish any
7 criteria for prioritizing additional students participating in the program.

8 (8) Outreach to families and students to increase participation in the program by
9 not only addressing learning losses, but by offering a fun, positive
10 environment with enrichment activities to counteract the negative impacts
11 from COVID-19 on student social interactions and development.

12 **SECTION 1.3.(a)** Employment of School Personnel. – For each local school
13 administrative unit operating the program, the following shall apply:

14 (1) Notwithstanding Articles 19, 20, 21, and Part 3 of Article 22 of Chapter 115C
15 of the General Statutes, a local board of education shall employ teachers and
16 other school personnel as temporary employees on a contract basis for the
17 period of the program. School personnel employed as temporary employees
18 by a local board of education pursuant to this act shall not be considered an
19 "employee" as defined in G.S. 135-1(10) or a "teacher" as defined in
20 G.S. 135-1(25), nor shall it cause school personnel to be considered an
21 "employee or State employee" under G.S. 135-48.1(10). In addition, school
22 personnel shall not be deemed as earning "compensation" as defined in
23 G.S. 135-1(7a) and shall not be eligible to accrue paid leave during their
24 temporary employment.

25 (2) For individuals who retired under the Teachers' and State Employees'
26 Retirement System (TSERS) on or after December 1, 2020, but on or before
27 March 1, 2021, the six-month separation from service from an employer that
28 is required under G.S. 135-1(20) in order for a retirement to become effective
29 shall not apply and instead a one-month separation shall be required, provided
30 that the position to which the individual returns is as a teacher or other school
31 personnel employed as a temporary employee on a contract basis for the
32 program as required in subdivision (1) of this section. Upon the expiration of
33 this section, all of the following shall apply:

34 a. The six-month separation from an employer required under
35 G.S. 135-1(20) shall again be applicable to individuals who retired
36 under TSERS on or after December 1, 2020, but on or before March
37 1, 2021.

38 b. In order for a member's retirement under TSERS on or after December
39 1, 2020, but on or before March 1, 2021, to become effective in any
40 month, the member must perform no work for an employer, including
41 part-time, temporary, substitute, or contractor work, at any time
42 between the expiration of this section and the end of the six months
43 immediately following the effective date of retirement, provided the
44 expiration of the six-month period of separation did not occur while
45 this section was in effect.

46 c. For individuals who retired under TSERS on or after December 1,
47 2020, but before March 1, 2021, any time worked in the program and
48 the time this section expires shall not be considered work for the
49 purposes of the six-month separation required under G.S. 135-1(20).

1 d. For purposes of this subdivision, local school administrative units shall
2 certify to the Retirement System that a retirement system beneficiary
3 is employed by the local board of education.

- 4 (3) From funds available, local boards shall offer a signing bonus of at least one
5 thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200) to any teacher who (i) had received a
6 past teaching bonus for reading in grades three, four, and five or mathematics
7 in grades four, five, six, seven, or eight or (ii) has received National Board for
8 Professional Teaching Standards Certification. Local boards of education are
9 encouraged to find ways to incentivize highly effective teachers to participate
10 in the program, such as increased compensation and varied contract durations.
- 11 (4) Local boards of education shall provide a performance bonus to a teacher who
12 provided instruction during the program, in a per student amount of at least
13 one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00), for each student not demonstrating
14 reading proficiency on the third-grade end-of-grade reading assessment
15 assigned to that teacher who became proficient in reading after completing the
16 program, as demonstrated by an alternate assessment.

17 **SECTION 1.3.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and expires October
18 1, 2021.

19 **SECTION 1.4.** Use of Reading Camp Funds. – Notwithstanding
20 G.S. 115C-105.25(b)(10) and any other provision of law, local school administrative units may
21 use funds allocated to the units for reading camps for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to also support
22 the operation of reading instruction for first, second, and third grade students in the school
23 extension learning recovery and enrichment program pursuant to this act. These funds shall not
24 be used for enrichment activities.

25 **SECTION 1.5.** Funds from ESSER II. – The General Assembly finds that one billion
26 four hundred forty-two million three hundred thirty-one thousand eight hundred eighty-eight
27 dollars (\$1,442,331,888) from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief II
28 (ESSER II) Fund was appropriated in S.L. 2021-1 to be allocated to public school units, pursuant
29 to subsection (c) of Section 313 of P.L. 116-260, for the purposes of responding to COVID-19,
30 including addressing learning loss and returning to in-person instruction.

31 It is the intent of the General Assembly to also direct the State Board of Education to
32 reserve a certain portion of remaining funds made available in the ESSER II Fund to meet the
33 emergency needs of the elementary and secondary schools of the State, pursuant to subsection
34 (e) of Section 313 of P.L. 116-260, to be held in reserve by the Department of Public Instruction
35 to be allocated to local school administrative units and charter schools to support in-person
36 instruction programs to address learning loss and provide enrichment activities pursuant to this
37 act. The allocation of these grants shall be prioritized to local school administrative units and
38 charter schools based on need as demonstrated by the expenditure of existing federal funding
39 received for COVID-19–related impacts.

40 **SECTION 1.6.** Residential Schools. – To the extent funds are made available, the
41 residential schools authorized by Article 9C of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes shall offer
42 a school extension learning recovery and enrichment program outside of the instructional school
43 calendar to students regularly enrolled in those schools. The program shall provide in-person
44 instruction in core subjects to address learning losses and negative impacts that students have
45 experienced due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year in a manner best suited to those
46 students' needs. The program shall include a minimum of 150 hours or 30 days of instruction.
47 Each residential school shall develop and submit a plan for its program to the Department of
48 Public Instruction no later than 30 days prior to the final instructional day of the 2020-2021
49 school year.

50 **SECTION 1.7.** Program Assessments. – The State Board of Education, within funds
51 available, shall make available to local school administrative units a single competency-based

1 assessment per grade and subject for students in grades kindergarten through eight that may be
2 taken at the beginning of the program and at the conclusion of the program. Each local board of
3 education shall ensure that the results of all competency-based assessments administered to a
4 student shall be provided to all teachers of record for that student for the 2021-2022 school year.

5 **SECTION 1.8.** Reporting Requirements. – By October 15, 2021, local school
6 administrative units shall report all of the following to the Department of Public Instruction:

- 7 (1) Results of competency-based assessment given to students in grades K-8 at
8 the beginning of the program.
- 9 (2) Results of competency-based assessment given to students in grades K-8 at
10 the conclusion of the program.
- 11 (3) The number of students who progressed to the next grade level after
12 participating in the program.
- 13 (4) The number of students who were retained in the same grade level after
14 participating in the program.
- 15 (5) The number of students who received credit recovery in high school.

16 By January 15, 2022, the Department of Public Instruction shall report to the Joint
17 Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the implementation of this act and all of the
18 information required in this section. The Department shall submit with its report a copy of each
19 program plan submitted to the Department, an explanation of the program outcomes completed
20 by the Department, and any other data deemed by the Department to be useful to the Joint
21 Legislative Education Oversight Committee in evaluating the delivery of programs.

22 23 **PART II. EFFECTIVE DATE**

24 **SECTION 2.** Effective Date. – This act is effective when it becomes law.