

Article 18.

Tarheel Challenge Academy.

§ 127A-220. Purpose; establishment.

The purpose of this Article is to authorize the North Carolina National Guard's Tarheel Challenge Academy to operate independently of existing schools. The Tarheel Challenge Academy is established as a Division of the North Carolina National Guard. The Tarheel Challenge Academy shall satisfy all of the following:

- (1) Exist as a cost-free program.
- (2) Be housed for administrative purposes within the North Carolina National Guard.
- (3) Be a community-based school that leads, trains, and mentors at-risk youth.
- (4) Be designated as an approved alternative learning program, as defined in this Article, and an innovative school option.
- (5) Create at least a 22-week residential program that requires a 12-month post-residential mentoring period.
- (6) Improve life skills and employment potential of participants by providing quasi-military based training and supervised work experience.
- (7) Teach the "8 Core Components" of academic excellence, job skills, health and hygiene, physical fitness, life coping skills, responsible citizenship, leadership, and service to community.
- (8) Increase opportunity for participants to receive a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- (9) Enjoy the full cooperation of other State and local agencies in carrying out its program. (2021-180, s. 19E.2(a).)

§ 127A-221. Definitions.

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this Article:

- (1) Academy. – Tarheel Challenge Academy, a Division of the North Carolina National Guard.
- (2) Alternative learning program. – A program offered by the Academy that provides specialized services for at-risk students outside of a standard classroom setting. Services should be designed to meet the needs of students who have not been successful in the traditional school setting.
- (3) Eligible participant. – An individual who meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. Is a minimum of 16 years of age and a maximum of 18 years of age at the time of entry into the program.
 - b. Has failed to complete or has left school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another school and has not received a certificate from a program of equivalency or has not progressed in a traditional high school setting.
 - c. A citizen or legal resident of the United States.
 - d. Unemployed or underemployed.
 - e. Not currently on parole or probation and not accused or convicted of a crime that would be considered a felony if the individual was an adult.
 - f. Free from use of illegal drugs or substances.

- g. Physically and mentally capable to participate in the alternative learning program. (2021-180, s. 19E.2(a).)

§ 127A-222. Administration; supervision.

The general supervision and administration of the Academy shall be vested in the North Carolina National Guard Adjutant General. It shall be the duty of the Adjutant General or his or her designee to do all of the following:

- (1) Create a written document that incorporates the terms and conditions imposed on the Academy by the Federal Youth Challenge Program.
- (2) Organize and establish all rules and regulations for the Academy, as necessary.
- (3) Direct and control all Academy personnel matters.
- (4) Oversee and direct the administration and functioning of the alternative learning program offered by the Academy. (2021-180, s. 19E.2(a).)