

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015**

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**HOUSE BILL 921**

Short Title: Educational Opp. for People W/Disabilities. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives L. Johnson, Glazier, Malone, and Avila (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.*

Referred to: Appropriations.

April 20, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**DPI STUDY/IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**SECTION 1.1.(a)** The Department of Public Instruction shall study and recommend methods and potential policy changes to the State Board of Education for improving the outcomes for elementary and secondary students with disabilities, including raising the graduation rates, providing more outcome-based goals, creating greater access to career-ready diplomas, increasing integration of accessible digital learning options, and providing earlier and improved transition services planning. The Department of Public Instruction shall do at least the following toward achieving the goals set forth in this section:

- (1) Examine current Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements and develop reforms with greater focus on outcome-based goals for students with disabilities.
- (2) Solicit input and bring together stakeholders and other interested parties to develop policies on transition services plans for students with disabilities from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, and high school to postsecondary education and for employment opportunities and adult living options.
- (3) Solicit input and bring together stakeholders to create accessible ways for students with IEPs to access the Future Ready Core Course of Study in more significant numbers as a viable option to the Occupational Course of Study.
- (4) Examine model programs that may be employed by local school administrative units aimed at increasing the graduation rate and school performance of students with disabilities.

**SECTION 1.1.(b)** It is the intent of the General Assembly to make funds available in the 2015-2017 fiscal biennium to the Department of Public Instruction to (i) implement the methods for improving outcomes for children with disabilities developed in accordance with subsection (a) of this section and (ii) provide technical assistance to local school administrative



1 units to establish model programs aimed at increasing the graduation rate and school  
2 performance of students with disabilities.

3 **SECTION 1.1.(c)** By November 15, 2015, and annually thereafter, the Department  
4 of Public Instruction shall report to the State Board of Education and the Joint Legislative  
5 Education Oversight Committee on the progress of the Department in developing and  
6 implementing (i) IEP reforms, (ii) transition planning policies, (iii) increased access to Future  
7 Ready Core Course of Study for students with disabilities, and (iv) model programs for use by  
8 local school administrative units to improve graduation rates and school performance of  
9 students with disabilities.

## 10 **INCREASE FUNDING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

11 **SECTION 1.2.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department  
12 of Public Instruction the sum of six million nine hundred twenty-three thousand two hundred  
13 eighty-six dollars (\$6,923,286) for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the sum of fourteen million  
14 seventy-seven thousand one hundred fifty-four dollars (\$14,077,154) for the 2016-2017 fiscal  
15 year to provide a one percent (1%) increase in funding for children with disabilities in each  
16 fiscal year.

17 **SECTION 1.2.(b)** For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the State Board of Education  
18 shall allocate additional funds for children with disabilities on the basis of three thousand nine  
19 hundred sixty-six dollars and twenty-four cents (\$3,966.24) per child. Each local school  
20 administrative unit shall receive funds for the lesser of (i) all children who are identified as  
21 children with disabilities or (ii) twelve and one-half percent (12.5%) of its 2015-2016 allocated  
22 average daily membership in the local school administrative unit.

23 **SECTION 1.2.(c)** For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the State Board of Education shall  
24 allocate additional funds for children with disabilities on the basis of four thousand nine  
25 hundred five dollars and ninety cents (\$4,005.90) per child. Each local school administrative  
26 unit shall receive funds for the lesser of (i) all children who are identified as children with  
27 disabilities or (ii) twelve and one-half percent (12.5%) of its 2016-2017 allocated average daily  
28 membership in the local school administrative unit.

29 **SECTION 1.2.(d)** The dollar amounts allocated under this section for children with  
30 disabilities shall also adjust in accordance with legislative salary increments, retirement rate  
31 adjustments, and health benefit adjustments for personnel who serve children with disabilities.  
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## 33 **PART II. POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

### 34 **PARTNERSHIPS FOR IDENTIFYING AND PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN** 35 **POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

36 **SECTION 2.1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of  
37 Governors of The University of North Carolina the sum of six hundred thousand dollars  
38 (\$600,000) for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the sum of six hundred thousand dollars  
39 (\$600,000) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. These funds shall be used by the Carolina Institute  
40 for Developmental Disabilities, in collaboration with the North Carolina Postsecondary  
41 Education Alliance, for the work of the Alliance's three regional Partnerships for Identifying  
42 and Promoting Excellence in Postsecondary Education for People with Intellectual and/or  
43 Developmental Disabilities.

44 The purpose of these partnerships is to build capacity for the expansion of  
45 postsecondary options for students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in order  
46 to improve their short- and long-term outcomes. Powers of the Partnerships include, but are not  
47 limited to, demonstrating innovative approaches for the education of people with disabilities,  
48 providing technical assistance to postsecondary institutions and programs, and making  
49 recommendations for the sustainability of these programs.  
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2 **INTERAGENCY ASSESSMENT OF AND PLANS FOR IMPROVING**  
3 **POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

4 **SECTION 2.2.** The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of  
5 Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, with the assistance  
6 of the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and  
7 Division of Social Services, the Department of Public Instruction, The University of North  
8 Carolina, and the North Carolina Community College System, and in consultation with the  
9 North Carolina Postsecondary Education Alliance, community stakeholders, and other  
10 interested parties, shall:

- 11 (1) Assess gaps and system needs to support transitions of people with  
12 disabilities to adulthood.
- 13 (2) Develop a program and fiscal policies to expand and sustain postsecondary  
14 education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- 15 (3) Plan and implement approaches to public awareness about postsecondary  
16 education and employment for people with disabilities.
- 17 (4) Plan and implement joint policies and common data indicators for tracking  
18 the outcomes of people with disabilities after leaving high school.
- 19 (5) Consider options for technology to link agency databases.

20 The Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse  
21 Services shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint  
22 Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services by November 15, 2015, and  
23 annually thereafter through November 15, 2017, on the implementation of this section.  
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25 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

26 **SECTION 2.3.** The State Education Assistance Authority shall study strategies for  
27 ensuring that the State system of financial assistance for postsecondary education is fully  
28 available to assist qualified students with disabilities who are enrolled in certificate-based,  
29 approved university programs developed for them. The Authority shall report to the Joint  
30 Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on  
31 Health and Human Services by March 15, 2016, on the results of this study.  
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33 **PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

34 **SECTION 3.1.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2015.