

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021**

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**HOUSE BILL 516**

Short Title: Raise Dropout Age to 18. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives A. Baker, Lambeth, Hurtado, and A. Jones (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 12, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO RAISE THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGE TO EIGHTEEN  
YEARS OLD.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 115C-378(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Every parent, ~~guardian-guardian~~, or custodian in this State having charge or control of a child between the ages of seven and ~~16-18~~ years shall cause the child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in ~~session-session~~, unless the child graduates from high school. Every parent, guardian, or custodian in this State having charge or control of a child under age seven who is enrolled in a public school in grades kindergarten through two shall also cause the child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in session unless the child has withdrawn from school."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-238.66(3) reads as rewritten:

"(3) School attendance. – Every parent, guardian, or other person in this State having charge or control of a child who is enrolled in the regional school and who is less than ~~16-18~~ years of age shall cause such child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time that the regional school shall be in ~~session-session~~, unless the child graduates from high school. No person shall encourage, entice, or counsel any child to be unlawfully absent from the regional school. Any person who aids or abets a student's unlawful absence from the regional school shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The principal shall be responsible for implementing such additional policies concerning compulsory attendance as shall be adopted by the board of directors, including regulations concerning lawful and unlawful absences, permissible excuses for temporary absences, maintenance of attendance records, and attendance counseling."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 116-235(b)(2) reads as rewritten:

"(2) School Attendance. – Every parent, guardian, or other person in this State having charge or control of a child who is enrolled in the School and who is less than ~~16-18~~ years of age shall cause such child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the School shall be in ~~session-session~~, unless the child graduates from high school. No person shall encourage, entice, or counsel any child to be unlawfully absent from the School. Any person who aids or abets a student's unlawful absence from the



1 School shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The  
2 Chancellor of the School shall be responsible for implementing such  
3 additional policies concerning compulsory attendance as shall be adopted by  
4 the Board of Trustees, including regulations concerning lawful and unlawful  
5 absences, permissible excuses for temporary absences, maintenance of  
6 attendance records, and attendance counseling."

7 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 116-239.8(b)(5) reads as rewritten:

8 "(5) School attendance. – Every parent, guardian, or other person in this State  
9 having charge or control of a child who is enrolled in the laboratory school  
10 and who is less than ~~16-18~~ years of age shall cause such child to attend school  
11 continuously for a period equal to the time that the laboratory school shall be  
12 in ~~session~~ session, unless the child graduates from high school. No person  
13 shall encourage, entice, or counsel any child to be unlawfully absent from the  
14 laboratory school. Any person who aids or abets a student's unlawful absence  
15 from the laboratory school shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a Class 1  
16 misdemeanor. The principal shall be responsible for implementing such  
17 additional policies concerning compulsory attendance as shall be adopted by  
18 the chancellor, including regulations concerning lawful and unlawful  
19 absences, permissible excuses for temporary absences, maintenance of  
20 attendance records, and attendance counseling."

21 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 7B-1501(27) reads as rewritten:

22 "(27) Undisciplined juvenile. –

23 a. A juvenile who, while less than ~~16-18~~ years of age but at least 6 years  
24 of age, is unlawfully absent from school; or is regularly disobedient to  
25 and beyond the disciplinary control of the juvenile's parent, guardian,  
26 or custodian; or is regularly found in places where it is unlawful for a  
27 juvenile to be; or has run away from home for a period of more than  
28 24 ~~hours~~; or hours.

29 b. ~~A juvenile who is 16 or 17 years of age and who is regularly~~  
30 ~~disobedient to and beyond the disciplinary control of the juvenile's~~  
31 ~~parent, guardian, or custodian; or is regularly found in places where it~~  
32 ~~is unlawful for a juvenile to be; or has run away from home for a period~~  
33 ~~of more than 24 hours."~~

34 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 143B-805(20) reads as rewritten:

35 "(20) Undisciplined juvenile. –

36 a. A juvenile who, while less than ~~16-18~~ years of age but at least 6 years  
37 of age, is unlawfully absent from school; or is regularly disobedient to  
38 and beyond the disciplinary control of the juvenile's parent, guardian,  
39 or custodian; or is regularly found in places where it is unlawful for a  
40 juvenile to be; or has run away from home for a period of more than  
41 24 ~~hours~~; or hours.

42 b. ~~A juvenile who is 16 or 17 years of age and who is regularly~~  
43 ~~disobedient to and beyond the disciplinary control of the juvenile's~~  
44 ~~parent, guardian, or custodian; or is regularly found in places where it~~  
45 ~~is unlawful for a juvenile to be; or has run away from home for a period~~  
46 ~~of more than 24 hours."~~

47 **SECTION 7.** Section 8.21 of S.L. 2016-94 is repealed.

48 **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
49 the 2021-2022 school year.