

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019**

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**HOUSE BILL 711**

Short Title:   Excellent Educational Standards. (Public)

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Sponsors:   Representatives Pittman, Kidwell, Speciale, and Brody (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

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

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April 15, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS.  
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** This act shall be known as the "North Carolina Education Standards and Curricula Act."

**SECTION 2.** The purpose of this act is to modify the teaching of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for kindergarten through grade 12 in local school administrative units.

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-12(9c) reads as rewritten:

"(9c) Power to Develop Content Standards. –

a. The Board shall develop a comprehensive plan to revise content standards and the standard course of study in the core academic areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, geography, and civics. The Board shall consult with the Superintendent of Public Instruction in developing the standards and shall involve and survey a representative sample of parents, teachers, and the public to help determine academic content standard priorities and usefulness of the content standards. A full review of available and relevant academic content standards that are ~~rigorous, challenging~~, specific, sequenced, clear, focused, and measurable, whenever possible, shall be a part of the process of the development of content standards. The revised content standards developed in the core academic areas shall (i) reflect high expectations for students and an in-depth mastery of the content; (ii) be clearly grounded in the content of each academic area; (iii) be defined grade-by-grade and course-by-course; (iv) be understandable to parents and teachers; (v) be developed in full recognition of the time available to teach the core academic areas at each grade level; and (vi) be measurable, whenever possible, in a reliable, valid, and efficient manner for accountability purposes. The Board shall ensure that standards developed surpass the Common Core Standards adopted by the Board in 2010.

...."

**SECTION 4.** G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(11a) To Develop Curricula for State Board Approval. – Local boards of education shall develop high-quality English language arts (ELA) and mathematics



1 curricula based on the standards adopted by the State Board of Education  
2 pursuant to G.S. 115C-12(9c). Local boards shall give careful attention to the  
3 need for age-appropriate curricula and instruction. The standards-based  
4 curricula shall be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval every  
5 three years. Scope and sequence documentation shall be included in the  
6 curricula submitted to the State Board. Curricula shall include the following:

- 7 a. Mastery learning objectives.  
8 b. Guiding principles of instruction for all content areas.  
9 c. The incorporation of sufficient direct teaching and reinforcement of  
10 content and skills in order to make deep understanding and application  
11 possible.  
12 d. Methods whereby teachers will be knowledgeable of pedagogy  
13 specific to the developmental readiness of the students they teach.  
14 e. For ELA curriculum, (i) the incorporation of developmentally  
15 appropriate practice in phonemic awareness and (ii) methods whereby  
16 teachers will be knowledgeable of phonics theory in order to  
17 emphasize phonetic principles as the basis of the American English  
18 language.

19 (11b) To Disseminate Content Standards to Parents. – Local boards of education  
20 shall disseminate to parents easily understood information on the content  
21 standards no later than four weeks from the starting date of each new school  
22 year. The information shall explain ELA and mathematics standards,  
23 providing examples, and shall explain all topics and skills that will be studied  
24 during the school year."

25 **SECTION 5.** The Department of Public Instruction shall collaborate with the  
26 educational agencies of other states that have rejected Common Core, such as Virginia,  
27 Minnesota, or Massachusetts for ideas on strengthening North Carolina ELA and mathematics  
28 standards and shall consider forming an interstate excellence in educational standards partnership  
29 with any combination of these or other similarly-focused states. In the event that the Department  
30 determines that a partnership would be in the best interests of the public school students of North  
31 Carolina, it shall present its recommendation to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight  
32 Committee by May 15, 2020.

33 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 115C-105.39A is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

34 "(d) Continually Low-Performing Local School Administrative Units. – A continually  
35 low-performing local school administrative unit is a unit that has been designated by the State  
36 Board as low-performing under subsection (a) of this section for at least two of three consecutive  
37 years. If the State Board identified a local school administrative unit as continually  
38 low-performing, high schools in that unit must offer a math curriculum that follows a traditional  
39 course sequence as follows: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Calculus. The State Board shall  
40 take steps to eliminate Integrated Mathematics in continually low-performing local school  
41 administrative units. Exemption from the traditional course sequence described in this subsection  
42 may be permitted only when a continually low-performing local school administrative unit  
43 presents to the Board substantial, disaggregated achievement data, justifying why an integrated  
44 approach supports high student achievement."

45 **SECTION 7.(a)** Professional Development for Teachers in Writing Instruction. –  
46 The Department of Public Instruction shall develop standards and companion documents for  
47 teaching and assessing writing for kindergarten through twelfth grade. The Department of Public  
48 Instruction shall make available to each local board of education annual professional  
49 development specific to writing standards to be provided to teachers. Whenever feasible, the  
50 Department shall partner with an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) in developing and making  
51 available the professional development. Any partnering EPP must provide professional

1 development that aligns with State Board of Education content standards in writing instruction.  
2 No later than June 15, 2019, the Department of Public Instruction shall recommend to the State  
3 Board of Education a plan for administering biannual assessments for teachers who have  
4 completed the professional development described in this subsection. One assessment shall be  
5 provided for teachers of grades four through eight, and a separate assessment shall be provided  
6 for teachers of grades nine through 12.

7 **SECTION 7.(b)** Enhance K-3 Reading Instruction Methods. – In continuing the  
8 administration of Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes (Read to Achieve),  
9 the Department of Public Instruction shall ensure that explicit phonics instruction is provided  
10 daily in each local school administrative unit. The State Board of Education shall ensure that  
11 principles of high-quality reading instruction are clearly defined and shall develop a uniform  
12 model that reflects that definition. The definition shall explicitly include teacher-directed,  
13 child-centered instruction and personalized learning. The Department of Public Instruction shall  
14 develop evidence-based reading instruction methods and shall implement a professional  
15 development initiative for building teachers' knowledge and skills.

16 **SECTION 7.(c)** Spelling Instruction. – Phonics-based spelling instruction shall be  
17 provided daily in kindergarten through eighth grade. Spelling curriculum shall incorporate word  
18 lists for use in conversation, class assignments, and formal and informal writing in order to  
19 promote each student's literacy progress. The State Board of Education shall ensure that every  
20 public school student receives instruction in a teacher-directed, student-centered study of words  
21 from kindergarten through high school. Instruction shall include English orthography, alphabet,  
22 pattern, and meaning. Students shall be assessed at least weekly on spelling performance and  
23 parents shall be notified of students' progress. No later than May 15 annually, the Department of  
24 Public Instruction shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the  
25 status of spelling instruction and student performance in spelling.

26 **SECTION 7.(d)** Vocabulary Development. – The State Board of Education shall  
27 ensure that students in kindergarten through twelfth grade receive challenging instruction to  
28 promote vocabulary development. Instruction shall expose students to a wide variety of  
29 word-study resources, including dictionaries, thesauri, research manuals, and style manuals.

30 **SECTION 7.(e)** No later than October annually, the Department of Public  
31 Instruction shall submit a report to the State Board of Education on the teaching of print and  
32 cursive writing in kindergarten through fifth grade. The State Board will discuss and vote on the  
33 approval of the report. At a minimum, the report shall include the following:

- 34 (1) Statewide trends in the writing styles among local school administrative units.
- 35 (2) Best teaching practices related to print and cursive writing.
- 36 (3) General findings on student performance in print and cursive writing.

37 **SECTION 8.** Local boards of education shall establish specific mastery goals by  
38 grade and by standards and shall implement a systematic way to measure student progress. The  
39 Department of Public Instruction may advise local boards in decisions pertaining to mastery goal  
40 setting. In the case of low-performing local school administrative units, the superintendent shall  
41 ensure that progression toward mastery is explained in each school's annual improvement plan.

42 **SECTION 9.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
43 the 2020-2021 school year.