

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025**

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**HOUSE BILL 971**

Short Title: Career Development Adjustment. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Blackwell, Torbett, Willis, and Reeder (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Education - K-12, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 14, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM FOR GRADUATION PLANS IN SELECT  
SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** Pilot Program Established; Purpose. – The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall create an Annual Career Development Plan Pilot Program (Program) for students entering the seventh grade at select schools during the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years and continuing through the students' graduation from high school. The purpose of the Program shall be to evaluate the efficacy of reviewing Career Development Plans (Plans) annually to better align students for on-time graduation and achievement of college and career goals and to ensure that all students graduate from high school college or career ready.

**SECTION 1.(b)** Definitions. – The following definitions apply to this Section:

- (1) Career Development Plan. – An individual plan created by each student that establishes the student's plan throughout middle and high school for graduation and career development pursuant to G.S. 115C-158.10.
- (2) Local board of education. – A local board of education governing a partnered school.
- (3) Partnered school. – A middle school and high school governed by a local board of education where at least half of the student population of the middle school is assigned to attend the associated high school.
- (4) Parent. – Defined in G.S. 115C-76.1.

**SECTION 1.(c)** Partnered Schools. – The Superintendent shall select 12 partnered schools that are proportionally representative of the population size and geographic distribution of public high schools in the State. The Superintendent shall provide a process for schools to apply to participate in the Program as partnered schools. The Superintendent shall be responsible for the final selection of partnered schools. In the event that there are fewer than 12 applicants, the Superintendent shall collaborate with local superintendents to select schools to be partnered schools. Partnered schools shall have each student entering the seventh grade during the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years complete an annual review of Plans.

**SECTION 1.(d)** Local Board of Education and IEP Support. – The local board of education shall ensure that students in partnered schools are provided assistance by a school counselor and planning time during the instructional day each school year to update their Plans. For students with disabilities, the student's IEP team, if applicable, may assist the student in completing and updating the Plan. Updates to Plans shall be made prior to student scheduling of courses for the next school year.



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**SECTION 1.(e)** Parental Involvement. – Partnered schools shall encourage parents to participate in development of Plans with their students and to sign a form provided by the school acknowledging the annual revisions of the Plans. Local boards of education shall ensure that Plans are easily accessible to students and parents and shall provide parents annual written notice of the creation or revision of a Plan, information on how to access the Plan, a listing of course offerings for the next school year with a description of the content of each course, and high school graduation requirements where appropriate. Prior to creating or updating a student's Plan, a school counselor shall attempt to meet with the student's parent, either in person or virtually, to explain the possible effects that the Plan might have on the student's graduation requirements and career development planning. Beginning in the tenth grade and continuing throughout the student's high school enrollment, a school counselor shall provide each student and parent information regarding State and federal need-based and merit-based financial aid programs to support postsecondary education and training using information provided by the State Education Assistance Authority and College Foundation of North Carolina. The school counselor shall also provide information on the federal free application for federal student aid (FAFSA), its use, and notify the parent that information included in the FAFSA is confidential and not accessible by the school.

**SECTION 1.(f)** Initial Career Development Plans. – Students in seventh grade in partnered schools shall develop an initial career development plan which will provide guidance as students develop Plans.

**SECTION 1.(g)** Annual Career Development Plan Updates. – In partnered schools, Plans shall be updated annually in addition to the following information being provided to students:

- (1) For eighth grade students, by the end of the school year, a list of the required core courses to be taken in ninth and tenth grade.
- (2) For tenth grade students, an identification of the graduation requirements relevant to the student's chosen postsecondary goals based on the student's career development planning.
- (3) For eleventh grade students not meeting the career and college readiness standards established by the State Board of Community Colleges, a plan for enrolling in remedial coursework for his or her senior year.
- (4) Any other minimum requirements established by the Superintendent.

**SECTION 1.(h)** Reporting Requirement. – The Superintendent or a local board of education shall develop reporting requirements for partnered schools participating in the Program to provide information on the effectiveness of the annual review of the Plans. The Superintendent shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by August 15, 2026, and each year thereafter on the progress of the Program, including any logistical issues that have arisen with the Program.

**SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.