

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

H.B. 117
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10062-MV-78

Short Title: School Calendar Flexibility Pilot Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Warren, Horn, Howard, and Johnson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE SCHOOL CALENDAR FLEXIBILITY PILOT PROGRAM.
3 Whereas, studies show that students in high poverty areas suffer a greater degree of
4 summer learning loss; and
5 Whereas, any student is prone to have poorer performance on final exams taken after
6 an extended holiday break; and
7 Whereas, in 2004, the State enacted rigid regulation of school calendar start and end
8 dates; and
9 Whereas, no factual data supports that later school start dates have a negative effect
10 on North Carolina tourism; and
11 Whereas, over 122 schools across 31 North Carolina counties currently have
12 year-round school calendars; and
13 Whereas, many students return to school in late July or early August for athletic
14 training; and
15 Whereas, many high schools and middle schools have football games and other sports
16 activities during the first weekends in August; and
17 Whereas, 43 House bills and 15 Senate bills sought to enact school calendar flexibility
18 during the 2017-2018 legislative session, on behalf of 96 local boards of education in 81 counties;
19 and
20 Whereas, tourism is a significant contributor to the North Carolina economy; and
21 Whereas, North Carolina consistently ranks as the sixth most visited state in the
22 country; and
23 Whereas, the State of North Carolina consistently appropriates more than 56% of its
24 biennium budget to education; and
25 Whereas, the citizens of North Carolina rightfully expect the very best return on their
26 investment in public education, and it is imperative to factually determine what effect, if any,
27 school calendar start dates may have on tourism; Now, therefore,
28 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
29 **SECTION 1.** Purpose. – The State Board of Education (State Board) shall establish
30 a School Calendar Flexibility Pilot Program (Program). The purpose of the Program is to
31 determine the impact of school calendar flexibility for opening and closing dates on student
32 achievement and summer internships and to identify and quantify the communities that can
33 support local school calendar control and those that cannot.
34 **SECTION 2.** Participation. – All local school administrative units in the following
35 counties, which collectively represent the geographic, economic, and social diversity of the State,
36 are authorized to participate in the Program: Anson County, Bladen County, Cabarrus County,



1 Caldwell County, Catawba County, Cherokee County, Cleveland County, Davidson County,
2 Davie County, Duplin County, Graham County, Greene County, Guilford County, Martin
3 County, McDowell County, Mitchell County, Northampton County, Robeson County,
4 Transylvania County, Warren County, Washington County, and Wilson County.

5 Any local board of education of a local school administrative unit authorized to
6 participate in the Program may elect not to participate. For each local school administrative unit
7 that elects not to participate in the Program, the State Board may authorize one replacement local
8 school administrative unit to participate in the Program. Together, the local school administrative
9 units participating in the Program shall represent the geographic, economic, and social diversity
10 of the State.

11 **SECTION 3. Implementation.** – Each local school administrative unit participating
12 in the Program shall do so for three school years, beginning in either the 2019-2020 school year
13 or the 2020-2021 school year. The State Board shall provide the Department of Commerce with
14 a list of the participating local school administrative units no later than February 1, 2020.

15 Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-84.2(d), local boards of education of participating local
16 school administrative units shall determine, for the duration of the Program, the dates of opening
17 and closing the public schools under subdivision (a)(1) of G.S. 115C-84.2. Except for year-round
18 schools, the opening date for students shall be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 10
19 and the closing date for students shall be no later than the Friday closest to June 11. A local board
20 may revise the scheduled closing date if necessary in order to comply with the minimum
21 requirements for instructional days or instructional time.

22 The required opening and closing dates under this section shall not apply to any school
23 that a local board designated as having a modified calendar for the 2003-2004 school year or to
24 any school that was part of a planned program in the 2003-2004 school year for a system of
25 modified calendar schools, so long as the school operates under a modified calendar.

26 **SECTION 4. Data Collection by Department of Public Instruction.** – For the duration
27 of the Program, the Department of Public Instruction shall contact each participating local school
28 administrative unit annually to determine (i) the actual dates for opening and closing the public
29 schools, (ii) the impact of the Program on student achievement and summer internships, and (iii)
30 any other information the Department deems necessary for purposes of the study. The
31 Department of Public Instruction shall provide the Department of Commerce with the actual
32 dates for opening and closing the public schools in each participating local school administrative
33 unit.

34 **SECTION 5. Department of Commerce Evaluation.** – The Department of Commerce
35 shall study the effect of the Program on the travel and tourism industry for all 100 counties of the
36 State.

37 **SECTION 6. Reports.** – By November 15 of each year following the operation of
38 the Program, the State Board and the Department of Commerce shall separately report to the
39 School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on the effects of the
40 Program. The State Board shall report on (i) implementation and administration of the Program;
41 (ii) any impact of the Program on student achievement; (iii) any effect of the Program on summer
42 internships; and (iv) any recommendations on the modification, continuation, and potential
43 expansion of the Program statewide. The State Board shall also recommend any local school
44 administrative units that should be assigned calendar flexibility on an ongoing basis. The
45 Department of Commerce shall report on any economic impact of the Program on the tourism
46 industry in the State. The School of Government shall evaluate this information and provide an
47 aggregated report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15 of
48 the same year.

49 **SECTION 7.** This act is effective when it becomes law.