

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

**SESSION LAW 2001-363
HOUSE BILL 195**

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE COURSES OF INSTRUCTION ON NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY TO STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND TO STUDENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND TO ENACT THE STUDENT CITIZEN ACT OF 2001.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-81 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(b1) Both the standard course of study and the Basic Education Program shall include the requirement that the public schools provide to all students two yearlong courses of instruction on North Carolina history and geography. One yearlong course of instruction shall be provided in elementary school, and one yearlong course of instruction shall be provided in middle school. Each course of instruction shall include contributions to the history and geography of the State by the racial and ethnic groups that have contributed to the development and diversity of the State. Each course of instruction may include up to four weeks of instruction relating to the local area in which the students reside."

SECTION 2.(a) This section shall be known as the "Student Citizenship Act of 2001".

SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 115C-81 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-81. Basic Education Program.

...
(g1) Modifications to the social studies curriculum to instruct students on participation in the democratic process and to give them hands-on experience in participating in the democratic process:

(1) The State Board of Education shall modify the high school social studies curriculum to include instruction in civic and citizenship education. The State Board of Education is strongly encouraged to include, at a minimum, the following components in the high school civic and citizenship education curriculum:

- a. That students write to a local, State, or federal elected official about an issue that is important to them;
- b. Instruction on the importance of voting and otherwise participating in the democratic process;
- c. Information about current events and governmental structure;
and
- d. Information about the democratic process and how laws are made.

(2) The State Board of Education shall modify the middle school social studies curriculum to include instruction in civic and citizenship education. The State Board of Education is strongly encouraged to include, at a minimum, the following components in the middle school civic and citizenship education curriculum:

- a. A tour of representative local government facilities such as the local jail, the courthouse, or a town hall, to help students understand the way their community is governed;

b. That students choose and analyze a community problem and offer public policy recommendations on the problem to local officials; and

c. Information about getting involved in community groups.

(h) Character Education. – Local boards of education may require the teaching of the following character traits in the public schools: Each local board of education shall develop and implement character education instruction with input from the local community. The instruction shall be incorporated into the standard curriculum and should address the following traits:

- (1) Courage. – Having the determination to do the right thing even when others don't and the strength to follow your conscience rather than the crowd; and attempting difficult things that are worthwhile.
- (2) Good judgment. – Choosing worthy goals and setting proper priorities; thinking through the consequences of your actions; and basing decisions on practical wisdom and good sense.
- (3) Integrity. – Having the inner strength to be truthful, trustworthy, and honest in all things; acting justly and honorably.
- (4) Kindness. – Being considerate, courteous, helpful, and understanding of others; showing care, compassion, friendship, and generosity; and treating others as you would like to be treated.
- (5) Perseverance. – Being persistent in the pursuit of worthy objectives in spite of difficulty, opposition, or discouragement; and exhibiting patience and having the fortitude to try again when confronted with delays, mistakes, or failures.
- (6) Respect. – Showing high regard for authority, for other people, for self, for property, and for country; and understanding that all people have value as human beings.
- (7) Responsibility. – Being dependable in carrying out obligations and duties; showing reliability and consistency in words and conduct; being accountable for your own actions; and being committed to active involvement in your community.
- (8) Self-Discipline. – Demonstrating hard work and commitment to purpose; regulating yourself for improvement and restraining from inappropriate behaviors; being in proper control of your words, actions, impulses, and desires; choosing abstinence from premarital sex, drugs, alcohol, and other harmful substances and behaviors; and doing your best in all situations.

(h1) In addition to the instruction under subsection (h) of this section, local boards of education are encouraged to include instruction on the following responsibilities:

- (1) Respect for school personnel. – In the school environment, respect includes holding teachers, school administrators, and all school personnel in high esteem and demonstrating in words and deeds that all school personnel deserve to be treated with courtesy and proper deference.
- (2) Responsibility for school safety. – Helping to create a harmonious school atmosphere that is free from threats, weapons, and violent or disruptive behavior; cultivate an orderly learning environment in which students and school personnel feel safe and secure; and encourage the resolution of conflicts and disagreements through peaceful means including peer mediation.
- (3) Service to others. – Engaging in meaningful service to their schools and their communities. Schools may teach service-learning by (i) incorporating it into their standard curriculum, or (ii) involving a classroom of students or some other group of students in one or more hands-on community-service projects.

- (4) Good citizenship. – Obeying the laws of the nation and this State; abiding by school rules; and understanding the rights and responsibilities of a member of a republic."

SECTION 2.(c) G.S. 115C-391(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Local boards of education shall adopt policies not inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitutions of the United States and North Carolina, governing the conduct of students and establishing procedures to be followed by school officials in suspending or expelling any student, or in disciplining any student if the offensive behavior could result in suspension, expulsion, or the administration of corporal punishment. Local boards of education shall include a reasonable dress code for students in these policies.

The policies that shall be adopted for the administration of corporal punishment shall include at a minimum the following conditions:

- (1) Corporal punishment shall not be administered in a classroom with other children present;
- (2) The student body shall be informed beforehand what general types of misconduct could result in corporal punishment;
- (3) Only a teacher, substitute teacher, principal, or assistant principal may administer corporal punishment and may do so only in the presence of a principal, assistant principal, teacher, substitute teacher, teacher assistant, or student teacher, who shall be informed beforehand and in the student's presence of the reason for the punishment; and
- (4) An appropriate school official shall provide the child's parent or guardian with notification that corporal punishment has been administered, and upon request, the official who administered the corporal punishment shall provide the child's parent or guardian a written explanation of the reasons and the name of the second school official who was present.

Each local board shall publish all the policies mandated by this subsection and make them available to each student and his parent or guardian at the beginning of each school year.

Notwithstanding any policy adopted pursuant to this section, school personnel may use reasonable force, including corporal punishment, to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in those situations when necessary:

- (1) To quell a disturbance threatening injury to others;
- (2) To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person, or within the control, of a student;
- (3) For self-defense;
- (4) For the protection of persons or property; or
- (5) To maintain order on school property, in the classroom, or at a school-related activity on or off school property."

SECTION 2.(d) G.S. 115C-81(g) is amended by adding a new subdivision

to read:

"(3b) A local school administrative unit may display on real property controlled by that local school administrative unit documents and objects of historical significance that have formed and influenced the United States legal or governmental system and that exemplify the development of the rule of law, such as the Magna Carta, the Mecklenburg Declaration, the Ten Commandments, the Justinian Code, and documents set out in subdivision (3a) of this subsection. This display may include, but shall not be limited to, documents that contain words associated with a religion; provided however, no display shall seek to establish or promote religion or to persuade any person to embrace a particular religion, denomination of a religion, or other philosophy. The display of a document containing words associated

with a religion shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other documents and objects displayed and shall not be presented or displayed in any fashion that results in calling attention to it apart from the other displayed documents and objects. The display also shall be accompanied by a prominent sign quoting the First Amendment of the United States Constitution as follows: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.' "

SECTION 3. If any provision of this act is declared unconstitutional or invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of this act as a whole or any part other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to all school years beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, except that:

- (1) The State Board of Education shall complete the modifications to the social studies curriculum required by G.S. 115C-81(g1), as enacted in Section 2(b) of this act, by December 15, 2001. The modified curriculum shall begin to be implemented during the 2002-2003 school year.
- (2) Local boards of education shall develop character education instruction in accordance with G.S. 115C-81(h), as rewritten by Section 2(b) of this act, by January 1, 2002, and shall implement this instruction beginning with the 2002-2003 school year. If a local board determines that it would be an economic hardship to begin to implement character education instruction by the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, the board may request an extension of time from the State Board of Education. The local board shall submit the request for an extension to the State Board on or before April 1, 2002. Local boards are encouraged to include in their character education instruction the responsibilities listed in G.S. 115C-81(h1) of Section 2(b) of this act.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 30th day of July, 2001.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 11:46 a.m. this 10th day of August, 2001