

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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SENATE BILL 721*

Short Title: Science Safety in the Public Schools. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Cowell.

Referred to: Education/Public Instruction.

March 14, 2007

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT SCIENCE SAFETY MEASURES IN THE PUBLIC
3 SCHOOLS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a
6 new section to read:

7 "**§ 115C-81.3. Science safety requirements.**

8 (a) Prior to July 1, 2008, and annually thereafter, each local board of education
9 shall certify to the State Board of Education that its high school science laboratories are
10 equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment for students and teachers.

11 (b) Each local board of education shall ensure that its high schools and middle
12 schools comply with all State Board of Education policies related to science laboratory
13 safety, including the requirement that an appropriate administrative person be
14 designated as the science safety officer."

15 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-296(b) reads as rewritten:

16 "(b) It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to maintain the highest quality
17 teacher education programs and school administrator programs in order to enhance the
18 competence of professional personnel certified in North Carolina. To the end that
19 teacher preparation programs are upgraded to reflect a more rigorous course of study,
20 the State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination and cooperation with the
21 University Board of Governors, the Board of Community Colleges and such other
22 public and private agencies as are necessary, shall continue to refine the several
23 certification requirements, standards for approval of institutions of teacher education,
24 standards for institution-based innovative and experimental programs, standards for
25 implementing consortium-based teacher education, and standards for improved
26 efficiencies in the administration of the approved programs. The certification program
27 shall provide for initial certification after completion of preservice training, continuing
28 certification after three years of teaching experience, and certificate renewal every five

1 years thereafter, until the retirement of the teacher. The last certificate renewal received
2 prior to retirement shall remain in effect for five years after retirement.

3 The State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination with the Board of
4 Governors of The University of North Carolina and any other public and private
5 agencies as necessary, shall continue to raise standards for entry into teacher education
6 programs.

7 The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the
8 Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and modify, as
9 necessary, the academic requirements for students preparing to teach science in middle
10 and high schools to ensure that there is adequate preparation in issues related to science
11 laboratory safety.

12 The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The
13 University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and develop enhanced requirements for
14 continuing certification. The new requirements shall reflect more rigorous standards for
15 continuing certification and to the extent possible shall be aligned with quality
16 professional development programs that reflect State priorities for improving student
17 achievement.

18 The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the
19 Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall reevaluate and enhance
20 the requirements for renewal of teacher certificates. The State Board shall consider
21 modifications in the certificate renewal achievement and to make it a mechanism for
22 teachers to renew continually their knowledge and professional skills. The State Board
23 shall adopt new standards for the renewal of teacher certificates by May 15, 1998.

24 The standards for approval of institutions of teacher education shall require that
25 teacher education programs for all students include demonstrated competencies in (i)
26 the identification and education of children with disabilities and (ii) positive
27 management of student behavior and effective communication techniques for defusing
28 and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior. The State Board of Education shall
29 incorporate the criteria developed in accordance with G.S. 116-74.21 for assessing
30 proposals under the School Administrator Training Program into its school
31 administrator program approval standards.

32 All North Carolina institutions of higher education that offer teacher education
33 programs, masters degree programs in education, or masters degree programs in school
34 administration shall provide performance reports to the State Board of Education. The
35 performance reports shall follow a common format, shall be submitted according to a
36 plan developed by the State Board, and shall include the information required under the
37 plan developed by the State Board."

38 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-521 is amended by adding a new subsection to
39 read:

40 "(c1) No local board of education shall invest any money in any new middle or
41 high school building until the plans for the science areas of the building have been
42 reviewed and certified to meet accepted professional standards for school laboratories,
43 preparation rooms, and stockrooms. The review and certification of the plans may be

1 done by the State Board of Education or by any other entity that is licensed or
2 authorized by the State Board to do so."

3 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law.