



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Catherine Truitt, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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October 13, 2023

Education leaders,

It was great seeing so many of you at the AIM Conference. We appreciate your engagement as we work through two critical and time sensitive legislative items, **Graduation Requirements** and **SB49 Parents' Bill of Rights**.

Graduation Requirements (HB 259):

The law no longer permits there to be local graduation **requirements** that exceed the State Board of Education (SBE) minimum graduation requirements. Furthermore, PSUs are now required to allow a student to complete the credits required for graduation within three years of entering ninth grade.

The new graduation requirements for a three-year option do not go into effect until Fall 2024 (current sophomores). For this academic year, **there are no changes**.

Know that **PSUs may continue to have expectations beyond the state requirements**, but these graduation requirements will, going forward, be recommendations.

We will also be developing a three-year graduation pathway, as required in legislation. We will work with your teams to receive feedback. We plan on moving this forward to the SBE in December/January.

Finally, there is a November 1 requirement that the SBE adopt an emergency rule related to the graduation requirements legislation. The policy slated to be adopted and its emergency rule will indicate that:

- PSUs may not exceed the minimum SBE graduation requirements.
- Students must petition to graduate early with a parent/guardian sign-off.
- There must be a parent meeting to clarify implications of early graduation.

The temporary rule will be amended once NCDPI and the SBE have had an opportunity to work with PSUs to review current graduation requirements statewide and determine the three-year option and whether the SBE needs to adopt new graduation requirements. CAOs will be receiving a survey soon as we gather information about current local requirements.

Parents' Bill of Rights (SB 49):

We understand that there is some confusion regarding the implementation timelines for various components of the Parents' Bill of Rights.

Each provision in Part I of the law is to be enacted July 1, 2024, and Local Boards should have policy approved and in place by the enactment date.

Regarding Part II of the law, the expectation is that PSUs will approve local policies by January 1 with the understanding that the full development of the *Parent's Guide to Student Achievement* will take longer to develop.

Based on our reading of the provisions in the Budget Bill HB 259 (Section 7.81.(d)), NCDPI is operating under the following assumptions:

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- Governing bodies of PSUs shall establish policies...that are effective no later than January 1, 2024.
- PSUs shall provide the *Parent's Guide to Student Achievement* to parents, students, and school personnel no later than the first day of school after January 1, 2024. Based on school calendars across the state, the first day of school is in August for traditional calendars and July for year-round calendars.

Additionally, the law stipulates (115C-76.30):

“The State Board of Education shall develop minimum requirements for public school units for a Parent's Guide to Student Achievement to provide what parents need to know about their child's educational progress and how they can help their child to succeed in school.”

NCDPI is currently working to complete the “minimum requirements” and have them approved by the SBE as quickly as possible and will provide a template which will include additional resources. We do not anticipate these requirements being approved prior to the November SBE meeting. Any updates to the minimum requirements will be communicated to PSUs no later than May 1 of each year.

By September 15, 2024, the following items will need to be submitted to DPI so that we can report to the NC General Assembly by November 2024.

- Link to policies related to Part I of the legislation.
- A few data points regarding parent complaints based on the legislation.
- Link to the *Parent's Guide to Student Achievement*; and
- A signed attestation form confirming compliance with the legislation.

In speaking with the CAOs on Wednesday, we will likely have the submission date in June 2024 so that this reporting does not get in the way of new school year preparations. NCDPI will send a simple survey for PSUs to complete with the information bulleted above.

To support PSUs with the development of the Guide, NCDPI plans to develop an optional template that a PSU may use as well as some considerations of content for the Guide. We anticipate this will be ready in December.

I appreciate your continued support and daily work for North Carolina's public schools. Our teams will be in touch and if there are any new major developments, we will share them with you. We will see you in the New Year, but until then my door is always open.

Sincerely,



Catherine Truitt
CT/mlb