

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

H.B. 987
May 2, 2024
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH40565-MVa-33

Short Title: FAFSA Completion as Graduation Requirement. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Hawkins.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO MAKE COMPLETION OF THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL
STUDENT AID A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-83.31 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-83.31. Exit standards and graduation requirements.

(a) The State Board of Education shall require the following for high school graduation:

(1) Successful completion of instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation as provided in G.S. 115C-81.25(c)(10).

(2) A passing grade in the semester course on the Founding Principles of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina described in G.S. 115C-81.45(d)(1).

(3) A passing grade in a computer science course as provided in G.S. 115C-81.90(c). The computer science course shall fulfill one credit that is not an English, mathematics, science, or social studies credit. Students enrolling in a public high school in this State after completion of the eleventh grade shall be exempt from this requirement.

(4) Completion and submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each student's senior year, unless (i) the student's parent or legal guardian, or the student, if the student is an emancipated minor, submits a signed waiver certifying that the student understands what the FAFSA is and declines to complete it or (ii) the principal of the student's high school waives the requirement due to extenuating circumstances.

(b) The following restrictions apply to the State Board of Education regarding certain graduation requirements:

(1) The Board shall not adopt or enforce any rule that requires Algebra I as a graduation standard or as a requirement for a high school diploma for any student whose individualized education program (i) identifies the student as learning disabled in the area of mathematics and (ii) states that this learning disability will prevent the student from mastering Algebra I.

(2) The Board shall not require any student to prepare a high school graduation project as a condition of graduation from high school.

(3) The Board shall not enforce a computer science graduation requirement for any student whose individualized education program states that the student's disability would prevent the student from completing that graduation requirement.



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(c) The State Board of Education shall develop a sequence of courses that shall be available in all local school administrative units to allow a student to complete the credits required for graduation in a three-year period. The Board shall indicate on a student's transcript if the student graduates from a public high school within three years of entering the ninth grade. A local board of education shall not require any additional credits beyond those mandated by the Board for high school graduation."

SECTION 2. G.S. 115C-218.85(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(8) A charter school shall require completion and submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each student's senior year as a graduation requirement in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4)."

SECTION 3. G.S. 115C-238.66(1) is amended by adding a new sub-subdivision to

read:

"h. The board of directors shall require completion and submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each student's senior year as a graduation requirement in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4)."

SECTION 4. G.S. 116-239.8(b)(2) is amended by adding a new sub-subdivision to

read:

"g. The chancellor shall ensure completion and submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during each student's senior year as a graduation requirement in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4)."

SECTION 5. Section 6(d) of S.L. 2018-32 is amended by adding a new subdivision

to read:

"(5c) G.S. 115C-83.31(a)(4), To require each senior to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a graduation requirement."

SECTION 6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be used to train, educate, and prepare public school units regarding the requirements of this act.

SECTION 7. Section 6 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2024. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law, and Sections 1 through 5 of this act apply beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.