

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 129
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/13/21

Short Title: Graduations/School Calendar/Certain Counties.

(Local)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 24, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PERMIT INCREASED ACCESS TO INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES
IN CERTAIN COUNTIES FOR GRADUATION OR COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
IN PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO CERTAIN LOCAL SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS TO ALIGN THE SCHOOL CALENDARS OF THOSE
UNITS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Notwithstanding Article 1A of Chapter 166A of the General
Statutes, any executive order, secretarial order, or directive authorized pursuant to Article 1A of
Chapter 166A of the General Statutes, or any other provision of law, the governing board of a
public or nonpublic school shall, in consultation with the local health department, establish the
number of individuals who are permitted to attend graduation or commencement ceremonies held
for the 2020-2021 school year. In no event may the number of individuals in attendance exceed
the occupancy or fire capacity of the venue where the graduation or commencement ceremonies
are held.

SECTION 1.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law.

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 115C-84.2(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) Opening and Closing Dates. – Local boards of education shall determine the dates of
opening and closing the public schools under subdivision (a)(1) of this ~~section~~section in
accordance with the following requirements:

(1) ~~Except for year-round schools, the~~ The opening date for students shall be no
earlier than the Monday closest to August 26, and the closing date for students
shall be no later than the Friday closest to ~~June 11~~June 11, except in the
following circumstances:

a. The school's calendar is aligned so that it is no earlier than the opening
date of a community college serving the county in which the school
unit is located, in whole or in part.

b. The school is a year-round school.

c. The school had a modified calendar for the 2003-2004 school year or
was part of a planned program in the 2003-2004 school year for a
system of modified calendar schools, so long as the school operates
under a modified calendar.

(2) On a showing of good cause, the State Board of Education may waive the
requirement that the opening date for students be no earlier than the Monday
closest to August 26 and may allow the local board of education to set an
opening date no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19, to the extent



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1 that school calendars are able to provide sufficient days to accommodate
2 anticipated makeup days due to school closings. ~~A local board may revise the~~
3 ~~scheduled closing date if necessary in order to comply with the minimum~~
4 ~~requirements for instructional days or instructional time.~~ For purposes of this
5 subsection, subdivision, the term "good cause" means that schools in any local
6 school administrative unit in a county have been closed eight days per year
7 during any four of the last 10 years because of severe weather conditions,
8 energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations.

9 (3) A local board may revise the scheduled closing date if necessary in order to
10 comply with the minimum requirements for instructional days or instructional
11 time.

12 ~~The required opening and closing dates under this subsection shall not apply to any school~~
13 ~~that a local board designated as having a modified calendar for the 2003-2004 school year or to~~
14 ~~any school that was part of a planned program in the 2003-2004 school year for a system of~~
15 ~~modified calendar schools, so long as the school operates under a modified calendar."~~

16 **SECTION 2.(b)** This section applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

17 **SECTION 3.** This act applies only to Rockingham County, Stokes County, and Surry
18 County.

19 **SECTION 4.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes
20 law.