

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)

Short Title: Achievement School District (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Bryan.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Subchapter III of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"Article 7A.

Achievement School District and Innovation Zones.

"§ 115C-75.5. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Article:

(1) Achievement school. – An elementary school under the supervision of the Achievement School District.

(2) Achievement School District or ASD. – The statewide school unit established pursuant to this Article.

(3) Achievement school operator or AS operator. – An entity selected by the State Board of Education upon the recommendation of the ASD Superintendent to operate an achievement school. The Department of Public Instruction may not be selected as an AS operator.

(4) ASD Superintendent. – The superintendent of the ASD appointed by the State Board of Education in accordance with G.S. 115C-75.6(b).

(5) Qualifying school. – A low-performing school, as defined in G.S. 115C-105.37, that meets one of the following criteria:

a. Received a school performance score in the lowest five percent (5%) of all schools that include all or part of grades kindergarten through fifth in the prior school year, unless one of the following apply:

1. That school both exceeded growth in at least one of the prior three school years and met growth in at least one of the prior three school years.

2. One of the models established in G.S. 115C-105.37B for continually low-performing schools has been adopted for that school.

b. Received a school performance score in the lowest ten percent (10%) of all schools that include all or part of grades kindergarten through fifth in the prior school year and has been designated by the local board of

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"§ 115C-75.6. Achievement School District.

(a) There is established the Achievement School District (ASD) under the administration

of the State Board of Education. The ASD shall assume the supervision, management, and

operation of elementary schools that have been selected as achievement schools pursuant to this

Article.

(b) An ASD Superintendent Selection Advisory Committee shall be established to make a

recommendation to the State Board of Education on appointment of a superintendent to serve as

an executive officer of the ASD. The Committee shall ensure that the individual recommended has

qualifications consistent with G.S. 115C-271(a). The Lieutenant Governor shall serve as chair of

the Committee, and shall appoint the following additional members:

(1) Three members of the State Board of Education.

(2) One teacher or retired teacher.

(3) One principal or retired principal.

(4) One superintendent or retired superintendent.

(c) The State Board of Education or its designee shall consider the recommendation of the

ASD Superintendent Selection Advisory Committee and shall appoint a superintendent to serve as

the executive officer of the ASD. The ASD Superintendent shall serve at the pleasure of the State

Board of Education at a salary established by the State Board within the funds appropriated for

this purpose. The Superintendent of the ASD shall have qualifications consistent with

G.S. 115C-271(a) and report directly to the State Board.

(d) By January 15 annually, the State Board and the ASD Superintendent shall report to

the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on all aspects of operation of ASD,

including the selection of achievement schools and their progress.

"§ 115C-75.7. Selection of achievement schools.

(a) State Board Selection. - The State Board of Education is authorized to select, upon the

recommendation of the Superintendent of the ASD, no more than five qualifying schools to

transfer to the ASD as achievement schools. The five qualifying schools selected for inclusion in

the ASD should represent geographic diversity, including urban and rural schools. The State

Board of Education shall select no more than one qualifying school per local school administrative

unit, unless the local board of education consents.

(b) Selection Process. - The selection of qualifying schools shall be based on an analysis

of performance over the most recent three-year period. Prior to recommendation of selection of a

qualifying school, the ASD Superintendent shall conduct an evaluation of the school to determine

the factors contributing to the school's performance and shall confer with the school principal,

local board of education members, the local school superintendent, and the local board of county

commissioners to share the findings of the evaluation. The school selection process shall also

include a public hearing to allow for parent and community input. The ASD Superintendent shall

evaluate and identify the qualifying schools to recommend for selection as prospective

achievement schools no later than November 15 prior to the initial school year in which the school

may operate as an achievement school, and shall notify the local boards of education where

prospective achievement schools are located by that date. The State Board of Education shall

select the prospective achievement schools no later than January 15.

(c) Local Board Response. - Upon notification by the ASD Superintendent of selection by

the State Board of Education of the qualifying school as a prospective achievement school, the

local board of education shall determine whether to (i) close the selected qualifying school, (ii)

transfer the school into the ASD, or (iii) request adoption of the principal turnaround reform

model for the qualifying school, as provided in and subject to G.S. 115C-105.37B. The local

board shall not be required to undertake the study required by G.S. 115C-72 before closing the

school. Before the adoption of a resolution, the local board of education shall provide for a public

1 hearing in regard to the proposed transfer, closure, or adoption of the principal turnaround reform
 2 model, at which hearing the public shall be afforded an opportunity to express their views. No
 3 later than March 1, the local board of education shall adopt a resolution either (i) consenting to
 4 transfer of the selected qualifying school to the ASD as an achievement school, (ii) closing that
 5 school at the conclusion of that school year, or (iii) requesting adoption of the principal turnaround
 6 reform model for the qualifying school. The State Board of Education may delay the transfer of a
 7 selected school to the ASD for one year upon the recommendation of the ASD Superintendent.
 8 (d) Public Notification. – The list of qualifying schools and selected achievement schools
 9 shall be made publically available on a Web site maintained by the ASD.
 10 (e) Waivers for AS Schools. – The ASD Superintendent may waive State Board of
 11 Education rules, regulations, policies, and procedures, or the provisions of this Chapter for
 12 achievement schools; however achievement schools shall be required to comply with, at a
 13 minimum, the statutory requirements for charter schools as provided in Article 14A of this
 14 Chapter. The goal for each waiver shall be improvement of student performance. All achievement
 15 schools shall comply with all applicable constitutional and statutory nondiscrimination
 16 requirements.
 17 "§ 115C-75.8. Selection of AS operators.
 18 (a) The State Board of Education may select an AS operator for a prospective achievement
 19 school by January 15, and shall select an AS operator for a prospective school no later than
 20 February 15.
 21 (b) The State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the ASD Superintendent,
 22 shall only select an entity to contract as an AS operator if that entity demonstrates one of the
 23 following:
 24 (1) The school or schools operated by the entity in this State or other states have a
 25 record of results in improving performance of persistently low-performing
 26 schools or improving performance of a substantial number of persistently low-
 27 performing students attending the school.
 28 (2) The entity has a credible and specific plan for dramatically improving student
 29 achievement in a low-performing school and provides evidence that the entity
 30 is currently operating a school or schools in this State that provide a sound,
 31 basic education or has demonstrated consistent and substantial growth towards
 32 providing a sound, basic education in the prior three school years, or is a
 33 contractual affiliate of such an entity.
 34 (c) The selected AS operator shall be provided opportunities to hold public informational
 35 sessions and other outreach to the community, prospective achievement school, and local board of
 36 education of a prospective achievement school prior to a local board's adoption of the resolution
 37 required by G.S. 115C-75.7(c).
 38 "§ 115C-75.9. Management of achievement schools.
 39 (a) Direct Management by AS Operator. – An achievement school shall be subject to
 40 direct management by an AS operator selected by the State Board of Education, upon the
 41 recommendation of the ASD Superintendent, for a five-year contract.
 42 (b) Role of AS Operator. – The AS operator shall be authorized to have a direct role in
 43 making decisions about school finance, human capital, and curriculum and instruction for the
 44 achievement school while developing the leadership capacity in such schools.
 45 (c) Assignment to Achievement Schools. – All achievement schools shall remain open to
 46 enrollment in the same manner with the same attendance zone as prior to becoming an
 47 achievement school. If a local board of education's reassignment of students within the local
 48 school administrative unit due to student population changes or openings or closures of other
 49 schools impacts the achievement school, the AS operator may appeal to the ASD Superintendent
 50 and request a hearing before the State Board of Education regarding the reassignment.
 51 Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-366, the State Board of Education shall, after hearing from both the

1 local board of education and AS operator, determine whether the reassignment of students
2 impacting the achievement school may proceed.
3 (d) Facility and Capital Expenditures. – Facility and capital expenditures shall be provided
4 as follows:

5 In addition to the transfer of funds as provided in G.S. 115C-75.10, the local
6 board of education shall be responsible for facility and capital expenditures at
7 the qualifying school.
8 (2) All AS operators and local boards of education shall enter into an occupancy
9 agreement establishing the terms of occupancy for the AS operator not
10 otherwise addressed in statute. If the parties are unable to reach agreement,
11 either party may petition the State Board of Education to resolve any issues in
12 dispute.
13 (3) The AS operator shall have first priority in use of the facility for any purpose
14 related to the operation of the achievement school. The local board of
15 education, with the consent of the AS operator, may allow use of the facility by
16 governmental, charitable, civic, or other organizations for activities within the
17 community, and may retain any funds received for such use.
18 For the purposes of this subsection, facility and capital expenditures includes routine
19 maintenance and repair and capital expenditures includes building repair and maintenance,
20 furniture, furnishings, and equipment.

21 (e) Transportation. – The local board of education shall provide transportation of all
22 students assigned to the achievement school in the same manner as provided for other schools in
23 the local school administrative unit in that school year.
24 (f) Memorandums of Understanding for Alternate Arrangements. – Notwithstanding this
25 section, the AS operator, in consultation with the ASD Superintendent, may elect to enter into a
26 memorandum of understanding for alternate arrangements with the local board of education to
27 address any of the following:

- 28 (1) Facility and capital expenditures.
- 29 (2) Transportation services.
- 30 (3) Services for Children with Disabilities.

31 If a AS operator elects to use a memorandum of understanding for alternate arrangements, the
32 AS operator and local board of education shall finalize the memorandum of understanding within
33 30 days of the initial request by the AS operator. If the parties have not completed the
34 memorandum of understanding within 30 days, the State Board of Education shall resolve any
35 issues in dispute.

36 (g) Student Records. – The local board of education shall make available in a timely
37 fashion all student records to the achievement school at no cost for all students of that school.

38 (h) Achievement School Employees. – The AS operator shall select and hire the school
39 principal for an achievement school. Within the limits of the school budget, the AS operator or its
40 designee shall select staff members in accordance with guidance from the ASD Superintendent.
41 Before finalizing staffing recommendations, the AS operator and the ASD Superintendent shall
42 interview all existing staff members at the qualifying school and review student growth and
43 performance data for those staff members for whom it is available. Notwithstanding Article 21A
44 of this Chapter, the AS operator and the ASD Superintendent shall be permitted to examine
45 personnel files of existing staff members for the qualifying school. The AS operator shall have the
46 authority to decide whether any administrator, teacher, or staff member previously assigned to a
47 qualifying school selected to become an achievement school shall continue as an employee of the
48 achievement school. Any such employees retained shall become employees of the ASD. An
49 employee hired to work in an achievement school shall be an employee of the ASD, and the
50 employees shall be under the exclusive control of the ASD. All employees of the ASD shall be
51 eligible for enrollment in the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North

1 Carolina, State Health Plan, and other benefits available to State employees. The AS operator shall
 2 provide funds to the ASD in an amount sufficient to provide salary and benefits for employees of
 3 the ASD working in the achievement school based on the terms of employment established by the
 4 AS operator.
 5 (1) Employees of Local Board of Education. – The transfer of a qualifying school shall be
 6 deemed a reorganization of the local school administration unit resulting in a reduction in force. If
 7 an employee is not given the option to continue as an employee for the achievement school, the
 8 local board of education may, in its discretion, do any of the following:
 9 (1) Continue the employee's employment with the local board of education.
 10 (2) Dismiss the employee due to a reduction in force as provided in Article 22 of
 11 this Chapter.
 12 (3) Dismiss the employee as otherwise provided in Article 22 of this Chapter.
 13 (j) Liability Insurance. – The AS operator shall maintain reasonable amounts and types of
 14 liability insurance as established by the State Board of Education. No civil liability shall attach to
 15 a local board of education, or to any its members or employees, individually or collectively, for
 16 any acts or omissions of the AS operator.
 17 (k) School Nutrition Program. – The achievement school shall participate in the National
 18 School Lunch Program, as provided in G.S. 115C-264.
 19 (l) Cooperation with ASD Superintendent. – The local board of education shall cooperate
 20 with the ASD Superintendent in carrying out his or her powers and duties as necessary in
 21 accordance with this Chapter."
 22 "§ 115C-75.10. Achievement schools funds.
 23 (a) Funding Allocation Selection. – State and local funding for an achievement school
 24 shall be allocated as provided in subsection (b) or subsection (c) of this section. The AS operator
 25 shall select one of the allocation methods as the method to be used for the achievement school.
 26 (b) Designated Funding. – Funding shall be allocated to the ASD for the achievement
 27 school by the State Board of Education and local board of education as follows:
 28 (1) The State Board of Education shall allocate to the ASD for each achievement
 29 school:
 30 a. An amount equal to the average per pupil allocation for average daily
 31 membership from the local school administrative unit allotments in
 32 which the achievement school was located for each child attending the
 33 achievement school except for the allocations for (i) children with
 34 disabilities, (ii) children with limited English proficiency, and (iii)
 35 transportation. The State Board shall provide the allocation for
 36 transportation to the local school administrative unit in which the
 37 achievement school is located.
 38 b. An additional amount for each child attending the achievement school
 39 who is a child with disabilities.
 40 c. An additional amount for children with limited English proficiency
 41 attending the achievement school, based on a formula adopted by the
 42 State Board.
 43 (2) The local school administrative unit in which the achievement school is located
 44 shall transfer to the ASD for the achievement school an amount equal to the per
 45 pupil share of the local current expense fund of the local school administrative
 46 unit for the fiscal year. The per pupil share of the local current expense fund
 47 shall be transferred to the ASD for the achievement school within 30 days of
 48 the receipt of monies into the local current expense fund. The local school
 49 administrative unit and ASD may use the process for mediation of differences
 50 between the State Board and a charter school provided in G.S. 115C-218.95(d)
 51 to resolve differences on calculation and transference of the per pupil share of

1 the local current expense fund. The amount transferred under this subsection
2 that consists of revenue derived from supplemental taxes shall be transferred
3 only to a achievement school located in the tax district for which these taxes are
4 levied and in which the student resides. The local school administrative unit
5 shall also provide the ASD with all of the following information within the
6 30-day time period provided in this subsection:

7 a. The total amount of monies the local school administrative unit has in
8 each of the funds listed in G.S. 115C-426(c).
9 b. The student membership numbers used to calculate the per pupil share
10 of the local current expense fund.
11 c. How the per pupil share of the local current expense fund was
12 calculated.
13 d. Any additional records requested by the ASD from the local school
14 administrative unit in order for the ASD to audit and verify the
15 calculation and transfer of the per pupil share of the local current
16 expense fund.

17 (c) Funding Memorandum of Understanding. – The AS operator, in consultation with the
18 ASD Superintendent, may enter into a funding memorandum of understanding with the local
19 board of education of the local school administrative unit where the achievement school is located
20 for all student support and operational services and instructional services to be provided by the
21 local board of education in the same manner and degree as in the prior school year or funding in
22 an amount equivalent to the amount the local board of education would have expended on those
23 services if provided. For the purposes of this subsection, student support and operational services
24 include cafeteria services, custodial services, broadband and utilities, and student information
25 services, and instructional services includes alternative education, special education services, test
26 administration services, textbooks, technology, media resources, instructional equipment, and
27 other resources. The AS operator and local board of education shall finalize the funding
28 memorandum of understanding within 30 days of the initial request for the memorandum by the
29 AS operator. If the parties have not completed the funding memorandum of understanding within
30 30 days, the State Board of Education shall resolve any issues in dispute.
31 (d) The ASD may seek, manage and expend federal money and grants, State funding, and
32 other funding with the same authority as a local school administrative unit, including decisions
33 related to allocation of State funds among achievement schools."

34 **"§ 115C-75.11. Accountability and governance for achievement schools."**
35 (a) The AS operator shall set clear goals, empower and equip teachers and school leaders
36 to meet the goals, and hold such teachers and school leaders accountable to meet the goals. The
37 AS operator shall apply to the ASD Superintendent for appropriate waivers for the achievement
38 school pursuant to G.S. 115C-75.7(d).
39 (b) The AS operator shall select, approve, or remove the school principal of an
40 achievement school that it is managing in accordance with this Article.
41 (c) The AS operator shall enter into an agreement with the school principal regarding
42 specific goals for the achievement school related to higher academic outcomes for students, safe
43 and positive learning environments for children, parent and community engagement, and the
44 efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars. The agreement shall be made publically available
45 on the ASD website.
46 (d) An achievement school shall not be included in any State evaluation or performance
47 models used for the local school administrative unit in which the school is located, but shall be
48 considered a part of the ASD for all evaluation purposes.
49 **"§ 115C-75.12. Term of supervision for an achievement school."**

1 (a) An achievement school shall remain under the supervision of the ASD for a minimum
2 of five consecutive years through a contract with an AS operator. The following shall apply to the
3 term of a contract with an AS operator of an achievement school:
4 (1) Early Termination of Contract Based on Performance. – If during the five-year
5 contract, the achievement school's annual percentage growth does not exceed
6 the average annual percentage growth of other qualifying schools for three
7 consecutive years, the State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of
8 the ASD Superintendent, may terminate the contract at the conclusion of the
9 academic year and select another AS operator in accordance with
10 G.S. 115C-75.8 to assume the remainder of the five-year contract and any
11 occupancy agreements or memorandums of understanding with the local board
12 of education at the beginning of the next academic year.
13 (2) Closure of Achievement School Based on Performance. – If by the end of the
14 five-year contract, the achievement school's average annual percentage growth
15 during the term of the contract does not exceed the average annual percentage
16 growth of other qualifying schools during the same term, the State Board of
17 Education shall close the achievement school and develop a transition plan to
18 return the school to the local school administrative unit.
19 (3) State Board Optional Extension of Contract for Three Years. – If by the end of
20 the five-year contract, the achievement school remains a qualifying school, but
21 has exceeded the average annual percentage growth of other qualifying schools,
22 the State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the ASD
23 Superintendent in his or her discretion, may continue the contract with the AS
24 operator for an additional three-year term. The ASD Superintendent and AS
25 operator shall engage the school, the school community, and the school's local
26 board of education in developing a transition plan for the school to leave the
27 supervision of the ASD at the conclusion of the three-year extension of the
28 contract. If the State Board does not elect to continue the contract, the State
29 Board may do any of the following:
30 a. Select another AS operator for a three-year contract.
31 b. Close the school as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.
32 c. Develop a transition plan to return the school to the local school
33 administrative unit for the next school year.
34 (4) AS Operator Option to Extend Contract for Three Years. – If by the end of the
35 five-year contract, the achievement school receives a grade of C or higher under
36 G.S. 115C-12(9)c1, the AS operator shall have the option to extend the
37 contract for another three-year term. The ASD Superintendent and AS operator
38 shall engage the school, the school community, and the school's local board of
39 education in developing a transition plan for the school to leave the supervision
40 of the ASD at the conclusion of the three-year extension of the contract.
41 Options at the conclusion of the contract shall include the following:
42 a. Conversion to Charter. – If, in the development of the transition plan, a
43 local board of education indicates by resolution to the State Board of
44 Education that the local board elects to not receive the transfer of the
45 achievement school back to the local school administrative unit, the AS
46 operator may apply to convert the school to a charter school under
47 Article 14A of this Chapter. If a charter is awarded, the charter board of
48 directors may request to use the facility as provided in
49 G.S. 115C-218.35. If the AS operator does not seek conversion to a
50 charter school or fails to receive a charter, the State Board may close the
51 school as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

b. Alternate AS Operator or Return to Local School Administrative Unit. - If the AS operator does not elect to continue the contract, the State Board may select another AS operator for a three-year contract or may develop a transition plan to return the school to the local school administrative unit for the next school year.

(6) Termination of Contract on Other Grounds. - The State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the ASD Superintendent, may terminate a contract with an AS operator at any time during the contract for financial mismanagement, noncompliance with federal or State laws, failure to comply with the terms of the contract, or evidence of criminal activity. The State Board of Education shall develop a transition plan to return the school to the local school administrative unit.

(b) An achievement school shall remain under the supervision of the ASD for no more than eight years.

(c) The State Board of Education shall make all decisions related to contracts for AS operators no later than May 1."

"§ 115C-75.13. Innovation Zones

(a) If a local board of education transfers a qualifying school to the ASD, the local board of education may ask the State Board of Education to be allowed to create an innovation zone for up to three continually low-performing schools within its local school administrative unit. The State Board of Education shall grant such requests for the creation of an innovation zone. The State Board of Education shall also authorize the local board of education the flexibility to operate the schools within the innovation zone with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school authorized under Article 14A of this Chapter and with exemptions from local board of education policies as needed to ensure autonomy under the guidance of the innovation zone office for financial, programmatic, staffing, and time allocation decisions.

(b) The innovation zone created by a local board of education must include all of the following:

(1) Development of a clear and specific plan for improving schools within the innovation zone.

(2) Establishment of an innovation zone office with a leader appointed by the local board of education and approved by the State Board of Education to govern and lead the schools in the innovation zone.

(3) Attraction of high quality staff at schools in the innovation zone through the use of incentives, favorable working conditions, and development of partnerships to develop human capital.

(4) Accountability for those schools based on established benchmarks and goals for student achievement and for support services provided by the local school administrative unit based on metrics established by the innovation zone office for effective and efficient delivery.

(5) Support for those schools by the innovation zone office to ensure priority in services from the local school administrative unit, pursuit of outside funding, and technical support, including support from external partners."

"(c) The State Board shall report annually to the Superintendent of the Achievement School District on any schools identified under this section as qualifying schools as defined in G.S. 115C-75.5 for consideration to be selected as achievement schools in accordance with Article 7A of this Chapter."

SECTION 3. G.S. 115C-105.37B(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, Article or Article 7A of this Chapter, the State Board of Education is authorized to approve a local board of education's request

1 to reform any school in its administrative unit which the State Board of Education has identified as
 2 (i) one of the continually low-performing schools in North Carolina or (ii) as a qualifying
 3 school that is not selected as an achievement school under G.S. 115C-75.7.
 4 If the State Board of Education approves a local board of education's request to reform a
 5 school, the State Board of Education may authorize the local board of education to adopt one of
 6 the following models in accordance with State Board of Education requirements:
 7 (1) Transformation model, which would address the following four specific areas
 8 critical to transforming a continually low-performing school:
 9 a. Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness.
 10 b. Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.
 11 c. Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools.
 12 d. Providing operational flexibility and sustained support.
 13 Restart model, in which the State Board of Education would authorize the local
 14 board of education to operate the school with the same exemptions from
 15 states and rules as a charter school authorized under Article 14A of this
 16 Chapter, or under the management of an educational management organization
 17 that has been selected through a rigorous review process. A school operated
 18 under this subdivision remains under the control of the local board of education,
 19 and employees assigned to the school are employees of the local school
 20 administrative unit with the protections provided by Part 3 of Article 22 of this
 21 Chapter.
 22 Turnaround model, which would involve, among other actions, replacing the
 23 principal, if the principal has been in that position for at least three years, and
 24 rehiring no more than fifty percent (50%) of the school's staff, adopting a new
 25 governance structure at the school consistent with this Article, and
 26 implementing an instructional program aligned with the Standard Course of
 27 Study.
 28 School closure model, in which a local school administrative unit would close
 29 the school consistent with G.S. 115C-72 and enroll the students who attended
 30 the school in other, higher-achieving schools in the local school administrative
 31 unit consistent with Article 25 of this Chapter.
 32 (5) Principal Turnaround model, which would require the following:
 33 a. Replacing the current principal with a turnaround principal. The local
 34 board of education, after consultation with the Superintendent of the
 35 Achievement School District, shall select an individual with a proven
 36 record of success as a principal or superintendent as a turnaround
 37 principal. The local board of education's selection shall be approved by
 38 the State Board of Education to serve as a turnaround principal.
 39 Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-287.1, hiring the turnaround principal on a
 40 five year contract that shall include significant compensation and other
 41 incentives, as determined by the local board of education. The
 42 turnaround principal shall be required as a term of the contract to
 43 develop a written plan with clear goals for dramatically improving
 44 student achievement at the school, including empowering and equipping
 45 teachers and school leaders to meet the goals, and holding such teachers
 46 and school leaders accountable to meet the goals.
 47 c. The local board of education shall consider all recommendations of the
 48 turnaround principal with regard to personnel assigned to the school,
 49 and shall, to the extent possible, implement those recommendations.
 50 d. Annually reporting by the turnaround principal on the principal's
 51 methods and the school's progress and performance to the local board of

1 education. The turnaround principal's report shall be provided to the
 2 State Board of Education.
 3 e. Sharing of information with other turnaround principals on a regular
 4 basis. The Achievement School District shall also serve as a resource
 5 for turnaround principals.
 6 f. Authority for the turnaround principal to select staff assigned to the
 7 school.
 8 g. Provision of additional discretionary funds by the local board of
 9 education to the turnaround principal to address specific issues in the
 10 school, including but not limited to professional development, extended
 11 school days, or parent academies.
 12 h. Authorization by the State Board of Education to operate the school
 13 with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school
 14 authorized under Article 14A of this Chapter.
 15 (a1) The State Board of Education shall authorize the adoption of the principal turnaround
 16 model in no more than 10 schools statewide."
 17 SECTION 4. G.S. 115C-321(a) reads as rewritten:
 18 (a) All information contained in a personnel file, except as otherwise provided in this
 19 Chapter, is confidential and shall not be open for inspection and examination except to any of the
 20 following persons:
 21 (1) The employee, applicant for employment, former employee, or his properly
 22 authorized agent, who may examine his own personnel file at all reasonable
 23 times in its entirety except for letters of reference solicited prior to employment.
 24 (2) The superintendent and other supervisory personnel.
 25 (3) Members of the local board of education and the board's attorney.
 26 (4) A party by authority of a subpoena or proper court order may inspect and
 27 examine a particular confidential portion of an employee's personnel file.
 28 (5) An achievement school operator and the Superintendent of the Achievement
 29 School District if the school where the individual is employed has been selected
 30 as an achievement school as provided in Article 7A of this Chapter."
 31 SECTION 5. Evaluation of the Achievement School District. – The State Board of
 32 Education shall contract with an independent research organization to evaluate the implementation
 33 and effectiveness of the Achievement School District in turning around low-achieving schools at
 34 the conclusion of the initial five-year contracts in 2022. The independent research organization
 35 shall include an analysis on the impact of public versus private funding in the effectiveness of the
 36 Achievement School District. The independent research organization shall report its findings to
 37 the State Board of Education no later than February 15, 2023. The State Board of Education shall
 38 provide the report of the independent research commission to the Joint Legislative Education
 39 Oversight Committee no later than March 1, 2023, along with any recommended legislative
 40 changes. It is the intent of the General Assembly to appropriate funding for the evaluation of the
 41 Achievement School District in 2022.
 42 SECTION 6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public
 43 Instruction four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year for salary and
 44 benefits for the ASD Superintendent, staff, and other expenses associated with the ASD. It is the
 45 intent of the General Assembly to appropriate to the Department of Public Instruction four
 46 hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) for the 2017-2018 fiscal year and annually thereafter for
 47 salary and benefits for the ASD Superintendent, staff, and other expenses associated with the
 48 ASD.
 49 SECTION 7. It is the intent of the General Assembly to appropriate to the Department
 50 of Public Instruction three hundred seventy five thousand (\$375,000) for the 2017-2018 fiscal year
 51 and annually thereafter for principal turnaround reform model grants. Upon appropriation of

1 funds, the State Board of Education shall award principal turnaround reform model grants of up to
2 seventy five thousand (\$75,000) per fiscal year for five years to local boards of education who (i)
3 have been authorized to adopt the principal turnaround reform model by the State Board for a
4 school, and (ii) provide a dollar-for-dollar match with non-State funding for the requested grant
5 amount. Principal turnaround reform model grants shall be used by local boards of education to
6 provide substantial incentives for turnaround principals and to provide additional discretionary
7 funds for use by the turnaround principal to address specific issues in the school.

8 **SECTION 8.** It is the intent of the General Assembly to appropriate to the Department
9 of Public Instruction four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000) for the 2017-2018 fiscal year
10 and annually thereafter for innovation zone model grants. Upon appropriation of funds, the State
11 Board of Education shall award innovation zone model grants of up to one hundred fifty thousand
12 (\$150,000) per fiscal year for five years to local boards of education who (i) have been authorized
13 to adopt the innovation zone model by the State Board for up to three schools, and (ii) provide a
14 dollar-for-dollar match with non-State funding for the requested grant amount. Innovation zone
15 model grants shall be directed by local boards of education to the innovation zone office to
16 address specific issues in innovation zone schools.

17 **SECTION 9.** This act becomes effective only if funds are appropriated by the Current
18 Operations Appropriations Act of 2016 for the Achievement School District.

19 **SECTION 10.** This act is effective when it becomes law, and supervision of
20 achievement schools by the Achievement School District shall begin with the 2017-2018 school
21 year. In the discretion of the State Board of Education (i) the ASD Superintendent may not be
22 required during the 2016-2017 school year to recommend qualifying schools for inclusion in the
23 ASD for the 2017-2018 school year and (ii) the timeline for selection of achievement schools for
24 the 2017-2018 school year provided in G.S. 115C-75.7 may be varied, but in no event may the
25 local board of education's decision occur later than April 1, 2017. The State Board of Education
26 may select up to five qualifying schools to transfer to the ASD beginning with the 2017-2018
27 school year, but shall select at least two qualifying schools to transfer to the ASD no later than the
28 2018-2019 school year and shall have selected five qualifying schools for transfer to the ASD no
29 later than the 2019-2020 school year.

