



# HOUSE BILL 900: Substitute Certain CIHS Partners/Wake.

2023-2024 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Judiciary. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate	<b>Date:</b>	June 19, 2024
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Paré, Crawford, Liu, Cervania	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Kara McCraw
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

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**OVERVIEW:** *HB 900 would authorize the State Board of Education to approve the substitution of a new higher education partner for two Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) cooperative innovative high schools (CIHSs), authorize WCPSS to continue to operate the schools as CIHSs while seeking a new higher education partner during the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, and appropriate \$111,484 in recurring funds for tuition payments for CIHSs.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Part 9 of Article 16 of Chapter 115C authorizes the establishment of cooperative innovative high schools (CIHSs). CIHSs are high schools formed through a partnership between a local school administrative unit (LEA) and an institution of higher education and provide high school students the opportunity to earn an associate degree, college credit, or a vocational certification along with their high school diploma. The partnership operates under a written agreement that is approved by the State Board of Education and the applicable governing board for the institution of higher education.

CIHSs are granted flexibility in operation similar to charter schools. Higher education tuition costs are paid for through State funds and are at no cost to the students. Recurring additional funds may also be provided to CIHSs through appropriations by the General Assembly. Additional funds are appropriated following submission of the schools by the State Board of Education to the General Assembly for conditional approval, but there is no process for substitution of a new higher education partner for a CIHS.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Part I of House Bill 900 would continue to recognize the Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy and the Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy (academies) as CIHSs with recurring funds for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years without a higher education partner. The academies would be required to provide students with opportunities to earn postsecondary credit.

The State Board of Education would be required to approve an application for a substitute higher education partner in the academies' written agreement during the same two-year period if the partner meets statutory requirements and the application is appropriately submitted. Once approved, the academies would continue to receive recurring funds without additional action by the General Assembly.

Effective July 1, 2024, Part II would appropriate \$111,484 in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to the Department of Public Instruction to address a shortfall in funds for tuition payments needed for CIHSs in the State.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Except as otherwise provided, this bill would become effective when it becomes law.

**BACKGROUND:** The Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy and the Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy are CIHSs operated within the Wake County Public School System. Both schools were previously partnered with St. Augustine's University, which is currently reporting to be in a probationary status pending arbitration proceedings following a denied appeal for loss of accreditation. Wake County Public School System is currently seeking a new four-year higher education partner.

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