



HOUSE BILL 756: Standards Advisory Commission.

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 27, 2023
Introduced by:	Reps. Torbett, Blackwell, Zenger	Prepared by:	Brian Gwyn
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *The 2nd edition of House Bill 756 would create the Standard Course of Study Advisory Commission to recommend academic standards to the State Board of Education.*

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-81.5 requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a standard course of study, providing, among other things, "a set of competencies, by grade level, for each curriculum area." G.S. 115C-12(9c) goes into more detail about the process the SBE must follow to develop content standards, including surveying parents, teachers, and the public, and ensuring the standards meet certain criteria.

Chapter 150B of the General Statutes is North Carolina's Administrative Procedure Act. Article 2A of Chapter 150B outlines the rulemaking process State agencies must follow.

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 756 would establish the Standard Course of Study Advisory Commission (Commission) to involve stakeholders and make recommendations to the SBE regarding the standards and competencies of the standard course of study.

Commission Structure

The Commission would be located administratively within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), but would exercise its powers independent of DPI.

The Commission would be made up of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and 16 members appointed by the General Assembly, including 8 recommended by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and 8 recommended by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The General Assembly's appointments would be subject to various categorical requirements. Additionally, the following individuals, or their designees, would be nonvoting members:

- President of the North Carolina Community College System
- President of The University of North Carolina
- President of the North Carolina Chamber

Members of the Commission would serve four-year terms that begin on July 1. No appointed member could serve more than 8 consecutive years. Vacancy appointments would be made by the General Assembly for the remainder of the term of office.

The Commission would elect a chair, vice-chair, and secretary from its membership. A majority of the Commission would constitute a quorum and the Commission would adopt rules to govern its proceedings. The chair, or the vice-chair in the absence of the chair, would have the authority to call for meetings. The initial meeting must be called by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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The Superintendent would be required to assign staff to assist the Commission's work. Additionally, the Commission could contract with content area experts from funds available.

Commission Duties

The Commission would be required to do the following:

- Develop and recommend to the SBE the standard course of study in accordance with the following requirements:
 - Involve and survey parents, teachers, and the public to determine priorities and usefulness of standards.
 - Review available and relevant academic content standards that are rigorous, specific, sequenced, clear, focused, and measurable.
 - Ensure that the content standards for the core academic areas meet certain requirements, such as reflecting high expectations, being understandable to parents and teachers, and producing reliable, valid, and efficient data for accountability purposes.
 - Require high school course content standards to align with postsecondary knowledge and skills, including the minimum course requirements for admission to the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, and employment in the 21st century economy.
- Develop support materials to be made available to teachers and parents upon approval by the SBE.
- Provide recommendations as requested to the SBE related to alignment of State programs and support materials with the revised academic content standards for each core academic area.
- Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) and the SBE annually beginning December 1, 2024, on its activities during the preceding year, including any recommendations and findings regarding the process for revisions to the standard course of study.

Procedures for Adopting the Standard Course of Study

The standard course of study would be adopted using the following procedure:

- The Commission would be required to submit its recommendations.
- The SBE would be required to adopt (without making substantive changes) or reject the recommended standard course of study.
- If the SBE rejects the recommendation, it would be required to state the reasons for rejection. The Commission could then amend the recommendation and resubmit it to the SBE.
- The SBE would be required to adopt (without making substantive changes) or reject the amended standard course of study recommendation.
- If the SBE rejects the original and amended recommendation by the Commission, the SBE could develop and adopt its own standard course of study, subject to review by the General Assembly.

Responsibilities of the SBE

The SBE would be required to develop and provide to the Commission a comprehensive plan to revise, on a regular basis, content standards and the standard course of study in the core academic areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, geography, and civics. The plan must clearly designate by year the subjects for review by the Commission.

The SBE, in consultation with the Commission, would be required to develop and implement an ongoing process to align State programs and support materials with the revised academic content standards for each core academic area on a regular basis.

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The SBE would be required to work with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina to ensure that teacher and school administrator degree programs, professional development, and other university activity in the State's public schools align with the SBE's priorities.

Review of the Standard Course of Study Developed by the SBE

If the SBE develops and adopts its own standard course of study after rejecting the Commissions' original and amended recommendations, the SBE would be required to submit a report of the proposed changes to JLEOC prior to implementation.

Changes that have been submitted to JLEOC could be implemented following the 31st legislative day after the SBE submits the change to JLEOC, except in the following situations:

- If a bill that specifically disapproves of the change is introduced in either house of the General Assembly by the 31st legislative day following the submission of the change to JLEOC, the change would become effective on the earlier of:
 - The day an unfavorable final action is taken on the bill.
 - The day that session of the General Assembly adjourns without ratifying a bill that specifically disapproves the rules.
- If a bill that specifically disapproves of the change is enacted into law before the change becomes effective, the change could not be implemented.

Other Provisions

The bill would exempt the standard course of study from the rulemaking requirements under Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

Initial appointments to the Commission would be for terms beginning July 1, 2023, and would be divided between two-year and four-year terms so as to stagger future terms.

The Commission would be required to review the social studies standard course of study during the 2023-2024 school year and provide recommendations to the SBE no later than January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would be effective when it becomes law and would apply to all standard courses of study implemented on or after that date.