



SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 8.23: Public Schools Open Enrollment Study

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 8.23

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Section 8.23 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257), as amended by Sec. 3.17 of S.L. 2026-61 (House Bill 268), requires the North Carolina Collaboratory to study how local school administrative units can allow students to attend any school within the local school administrative unit in which the student is domiciled, other than the assigned base school. The study must include the following:

- A review of existing voluntary open enrollment and freedom of choice plans.
- Considerations for implementing mandatory open enrollment plans including the following:
 - The number of enrollment periods a mandatory open enrollment plan should have in a year.
 - Types of application processes.
 - How school capacity issues should be addressed and communicated to parents, including waitlist options.
 - Transportation options for students when they choose a school other than their assigned base school.
 - Reasons a local school administrative unit could deny a request under a mandatory open enrollment plan.
 - Any appeals processes that would be available for denials of requests of school assignment under a mandatory open enrollment plan.

The North Carolina Collaboratory must report its findings, including any recommended legislation, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by June 1, 2027.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

Kara McCraw
Director



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