



2025-2026 General Assembly

SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.11: Competency-Based High School/Healthcare and High-Tech Pathways Program

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 7.11

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Section 7.11 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) establishes the Competency-Based High School and Healthcare and High-Tech Pathways Program (Program) for the 2026-2027, 2027-2028, and 2028-2029 school years in Mooresville Graded School District in partnership with Mitchell Community College. The Program will create pathways that use competency-based education to result in an associate degree or industry-recognized credential with an emphasis on healthcare preparation. An organization with demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing these types of programs will assist with developing the Program framework during the 2026-2027 school year. Students will be able to participate in the Program by no later than the 2028-2029 school year.

In implementing the Program, Mooresville Graded School District and Mitchell Community College can use the following flexibilities:

- Offering Credit by Demonstrated Mastery assessments and CTE Proof of Learning assessments outside of the State testing windows.
- Enrolling students in community college courses prior to 11th grade without meeting the requirements for 9th or 10th grade enrollment.
- Allowing participating students access to all community college courses, regardless of pathway selection.
- Replacing any high school graduation credit requirement with community college courses or locally developed credit by mastery course consistent with the student's pathway, except those in the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- Operating any high school in the district under a restart model which grants charter-like flexibility, allowing for calendar flexibility.

Mooresville Graded School District must select a vendor with demonstrated experience to develop standards-aligned proficiency scales for all content areas in grades 9-12 to ensure that educators have the necessary tools to use competency-based education. The vendor will provide professional development and coaching in the use of competency-based education and the proficiency scales.

This section appropriates \$4 million in nonrecurring funds to Mooresville Graded School District to contract with an organization to design the framework, to contract with a vendor to provide proficiency scales and professional development, and to hire an additional staff person to oversee the Program. The funds will remain available until the end of the 2028-2029 school year.

Section 8.15 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) requires the Office of Learning Research at the North Carolina Collaboratory to study and evaluate the Program and report to the Joint Legislative Education

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Oversight Committee by March 15 in 2028, 2029, and 2030 on the total number of students engaging with the Program, the amount of funds expended to implement, design, and operate the Program, and the Program's effects on student achievement and learning outcomes.

These sections became effective July 1, 2026.