SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Section 6.5: Apprenticeship Studies

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of:	S.L. 2026-41, Section 6.5	**Date:**	August 20, 2026
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Section 6.5 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257), as amended by Section 3.6 of S.L. 2026-61 (House Bill 268), directs ApprenticeshipNC to study and report on the feasibility of designing and implementing State funding incentives for employers and other apprenticeship sponsors to increase the availability of registered apprenticeship programs and improving apprentice enrollment, completion, post-completion education and labor market outcomes. The study must include the following:

- Alternative incentive structures and design considerations to identify avenues to increase apprenticeship starts, completions, positive post-completion outcomes, and to ensure efficient use of State funds.
- Types of incentives that could be offered including grants, wage subsidies, and tax credits.
- Payment structures tied to apprentice hiring, wage progression, credential attainment completion, and post-completion outcomes.
- Eligibility criteria, including occupations and industries.
- Quality and accountability thresholds, such as minimum wage thresholds.
- Review of academic policy literature on apprenticeship incentives in other states.
- All of the following items:
    - A proposed structure or set of options for State apprenticeship incentives.
    - Identification of statutory, administrative, or implementation barriers.
    - Estimated fiscal impacts and recommended appropriations, including identification of existing or complementary State, federal, and private funding streams that could be leveraged to offset or reduce the need for additional State appropriations.
    - Strategies to balance up-front and early implementation costs of apprenticeship program management with an emphasis on increasing apprenticeship completion and post-completion education and labor market outcomes.
    - A proposed policy for ongoing evaluation of any incentive adopted, including approaches to program monitoring, data collection, and assessment of impacts on participation and outcomes.
    - The study must be submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) by March 15, 2027.

This section also directs ApprenticeshipNC to develop a plan to facilitate one or more expedited pathways for apprenticeship candidates to enter the teaching profession. This plan must be developed in collaboration with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Department of Public Instruction, and TeachNC. ApprenticeshipNC can also collaborate with representatives of approved educator preparation programs, local school administrative units, and existing apprenticeship programs. The plan must include at least the following components:

- Options for an accelerated transition pathway to allow high school students to earn college credits leading to a teaching license while participating in structured, paid, or other experiential learning in the classroom.
- Maximize usage and transferability of the following coursework completion opportunities:
  - College transfer pathways provided through the Career and College Promise Program that support entry into a recognized educator preparation program.
  - Community college coursework leading to completion of an associate degree related to teacher preparation.
  - Online or asynchronous coursework provided at a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina leading to a bachelor's degree.
  - Enrollment in an associate degree program or a bachelor's degree program while serving (i) as a full-time employee in a public school unit and (ii) as an apprentice teacher in a registered apprenticeship program.
- Any legislative changes or appropriations needed to implement the plan.

This plan must be developed and submitted to JLEOC by March 15, 2027.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.