

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**Title:** Program Approval and Exemption Requests Under the Innovative Education Initiatives Act**Type of Executive Summary:**

Action
 Action on First Reading
 Discussion
 Information

Policy Implications:

- Constitution _____
 General Statute #115C-238.50 Part 9 (General Session 2003-277 - Senate Bill 656)
 SBE Policy # _____
 SBE Policy Amendment
 SBE Policy (New)
 APA # _____
 APA Amendment
 APA (New)
 Other _____

Presenter(s): Dr. Elsie C. Leak (Associate Superintendent, Curriculum and School Reform Services) and Ms. Carolyn White (Director, Learn and Earn, New Schools Project)

Description:

An Act to Establish the Innovative Education Initiatives Act, Section 2, Article 16 of Chapter 115C-238, Part 9, Cooperative Innovative High School programs, authorizes boards of trustees of community colleges and local boards of education, boards of governors of the UNC System and the independent colleges to jointly establish cooperative innovative programs in high schools and community colleges that will expand students' opportunities for education success through high quality instructional programming. These cooperative innovative high school programs shall targeted: (1) high school students who are at risk of dropping out of high school before attaining a high school diploma or (2) high school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction. GS 115C-238.53,(f) states "Except as provided in this Part and pursuant to the terms of the agreement, a program is exempt from laws and rules applicable to a local board of education, a local school administrative unit, a community college, or a local board of trustees of a community college."

The attachment for this item includes the applying schools, the waivers requested, barriers needing to be removed, and recommendations to support the first year of implementation along with programmatic details.

Resources:

N/A

Input Process:

Personnel of LEA's and community colleges

Stakeholders:

LEAs, community college, UNC and independent college personnel, high schools students, parents, and school staff

Timeline For Action:

This item is presented for discussion at the April 2007 State Board of Education meeting and will be returned for action at the May 2007 SBE meeting.

Recommendations:

It is requested that the SBE discuss the exemption requests presented and whether the school programs should be approved in preparation for taking action in May.

Audiovisual equipment requested for the presentation:

Data Projector/Video (Videotape/DVD and/or Computer Data, Internet, Presentations-PowerPoint preferred)
Specify: _____

Audio Requirements (computer or other, except for PA system which is provided)
Specify: _____

Document Camera (for transparencies or paper documents – white paper preferred)

Motion By: _____

Seconded By: _____

Vote: Yes _____ No _____

Abstain _____

Approved _____ Disapproved _____

Postponed _____ Revised _____

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Cooperative Innovative High School Programs (Part I)

Innovative Education Initiatives Act Summary

Session Law 2003-277 (SB 656) as amended by S.L. 2005-276, authorizes local boards of education to jointly establish with one or more boards of trustees cooperative innovative programs in high schools and colleges or universities to serve high school students who are at risk of dropping out of school before attaining a high school diploma, or to serve high school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction. Students would be eligible to attend these programs as early as ninth grade. The programs may include the creation of a school within a school, a technical high school, or a high school or technical center located on the campus of a college or university. A program would operate under the terms of a signed written agreement for a term of no more than five school years.

The act further directs “that the boards may approve programs recommended by the joint advisory committee or may approve other programs that were not recommended.” General Statute (G.S.) 115C-238.51(d) as modified by S.L. 2005-345 further directs that the “State Boards shall approve all applications by June 30 of each year.” G.S. 115C-238.53(f) also provides that “[e]xcept as provided in this Part and under the terms of the agreement, a program may be exempted by the applicable governing board from laws and rules applicable to a local board of education, a local school administrative unit, a community college, a constituent institution or a local board of trustees. (2005-276, s. 7.33.a.)” Nothing in the act is to be construed to obligate the General Assembly to make appropriations to implement the act. This act became effective June 27, 2003 and was subsequently codified as Part 9, G.S. 115C-238.50 – G.S. 115C-238.55.

Applying Schools

The following schools submitted applications under Section 2 of the Innovative Education Initiatives Act for consideration by the governing boards. State Board of Education regions are indicated in parentheses.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (6)

Early College High School Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools-UNC-Charlotte is to be located on the campus of UNC Charlotte and will be designed to provide a small, autonomous, interactive learning environment for a diverse population of students who will graduate from high school following the College/University Prep Course of Study. The students will have advanced skills in communications, problem solving, conceptual thinking and a minimum of 24 transferable college credits. The goal of the Early College High School will be to offer a program of rigorous and meaningful instruction, within a system of supportive relationships for students in grade 9-12 with an enrollment of 60 students per grade with real-world experiences that are integrated into a relevant curriculum.

The **Cato Middle College High School (CMCHS)**, working draft school name, will serve Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) 11th and 12th graders only, providing them with the following opportunities:

- acceleration of their academic programs by enrollment in honors-level high school courses;

- acquisition of at least one year of higher education credit before high school graduation by enrollment in Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) credit courses;
- advanced standing toward the completion of an associate's degree or an Associate in Applied Science degree upon high school graduation;
- preparation for a career in technical fields such as engineering, health sciences, and information technology; and/or,
- acquisition of a license and/or a certificate in a technical field.

The CMCHS will deliver educational services in a non-traditional setting and schedule, as it is situated on a community college campus, and CMCHS classes will take place between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The school's small size will augment student learning experiences, since the maximum school enrollment will be 200 (100 juniors, 100 seniors). Small school size also facilitates each of the student's programs of instruction.

Davie County Schools (7)

The Davie County Early College High School (DCECHS) will be a collaborative effort of Davie County Schools (DCS) and Davidson County Community College (DCCC) and will be located on the Davie campus of DCCC. The school will engage its students in a smaller learning community which will provide a rigorous study of high school and college course requirements, culminating in a high school diploma and associate's degree or two years college credit within a four- to five-year early college high school learning experience. The school will enroll 60 ninth graders each year and will have a maximum enrollment of 240 students. These students will mirror the demographics of the current high school. When fully implemented, the faculty, students, and parents of the DCECHS will be empowered, shared decision-makers who possess a profound ownership of the school which will strongly insure its sustainability and continuous improvement.

Guilford County Schools (5)

Guilford County Schools, in collaboration with Guilford Technical Community College, will open the Middle/Early College at GTCC Greensboro. This school will serve a diverse student body in grades nine through twelve, including students who do not see themselves as college students. Rigor, relationships, and relevance will be the guiding themes for planning and implementation of a seamless high school/college experience for all students who enroll. Goals and strategies will reflect the Guiding Principles for Early Colleges, with staff development a priority. Students will graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree or two years of transferable college credit. The school's schedule will provide affective and academic support as well as work experience. Collaboration of the GCS and GTCC staff will be consistent as the school creates a very personalized learning community to benefit all students.

Lenoir County Schools (2)

Lenoir County Early College High School (LCECHS) is committed to preparing all students for college, work, and citizenship. Students enrolled in LCECHS will have rigorous preparation for any post-secondary education or employment pathway. Rising freshmen in Lenoir County who elect to attend LCECHS will earn an associate's degree from Lenoir Community College while simultaneously completing a high school diploma. LCECHS will combine high expectations and focused, relevant courses of study with strong involvement of caring adults who mentor, advise, and support students throughout their high school and community college careers. Fully implemented, LCECHS will have a diverse population of 200 students.

New Hanover County Schools (2)

The Wilmington Early College High School is a non-traditional high school that is committed to preparing its students for life in the 21st century: global awareness, citizenship, and a strong work ethic. The WECHS family, parents, teachers and Cape Fear Community College will ensure that every student will have the wisdom to know the appropriate way to act, enthusiasm for success, confidence to advocate for their educational needs, honor to abide by the high standards of the school and community college, and the strength to accept the responsibility of challenging academic work.

Polk County Schools (8)

The Polk County Virtual Early College High School will be a collaborative effort of Polk County Schools and The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Due to the virtual nature of the school, it will be located both in cyberspace and Polk County. In year one, the school will be located at Polk County High School. In year two, the school will move to a separate facility in Columbus, the county seat. The school will engage its students in a unique virtual learning environment, which will provide a rigorous study of high school and college course requirements, culminating in a high school diploma and two years college credit within a four- to five-year early college high school learning experience. The school's course offerings will be a combination of live instruction and 22 virtual college courses provided by UNC-G. The students will be able to benefit from many virtual opportunities, such as online chat and virtual college tutors, while having the support of live Polk County instructors. It is our belief that the virtual design of the courses by UNC-G will be changing the nature of instructional delivery to our students. The school will enroll 25 ninth `graders each year and will have a maximum enrollment of 125 students. When fully implemented, the faculty, students, and parents of the Virtual Early College will be empowered, shared decision makers who possess a profound ownership of the school, which will strongly insure its sustainability and continuous improvement.

Richmond County Schools (4)

The Richmond County Early College High School will provide a diverse student population with a personalized learning experience that will prepare them for higher education and the knowledge and skills to be successful in the workplace. Richmond County Schools and Richmond Community College will form a partnership offering a four-year program leading to a high school diploma while earning an associate's degree or two years of college credit toward a bachelor's degree.

Wayne County Schools (2)

The Wayne Early/Middle College High School has been created out of a long and solid partnership between Wayne County Public Schools (WCPS) and Wayne Community College (WCC). The creation of a small, autonomous high school with a strong academic focus and personalized relationships will serve a diverse population. The population will not be restricted to a particular group yet will have an emphasis on underrepresented populations. The Wayne Early/Middle college High School will be centered on improving graduation rates and preparing students for entry into high-skilled careers.

Yadkin County Schools (7)

Yadkin County Schools would like to establish a Yadkin County Learn and Earn High School in conjunction with Surry Community College. We would like to establish the Yadkin Learn and Earn Technology School for those students interested in receiving an associate's degree in applied science. Our hopes are to interest 50 students in the first year of this program.

Part II – District Initiatives

Beaufort County Schools (1)

In February 2005, Beaufort County Schools received a USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant to equip the county's three high schools with interactive teleconferencing equipment to permit students from the three high schools to enroll in the same AP, Honors, and specialized high school courses via distance education. These classrooms were used during the 2005-06 school year to telecast classes among three high schools using high school teachers. The school district, in partnership with Beaufort County Community College, was awarded a second DLT grant in November 2006 to launch the Beaufort College Academy, which employs interactive teleconferencing to broadcast college-level courses from Beaufort County Community College to the district's three high schools.

Performance Learning Center – Cabarrus County (6)

The Performance Learning Center is an alternative approach to high school. North Carolina Communities in Schools and Cabarrus County Schools have partnered to open a Performance Learning Center in Cabarrus County. This school will follow the blueprint established by Communities in Schools. Students who are at risk of dropping out of school prior to earning a high school diploma are the target population. The goals of the Performance Learning Center are aligned with the requirements for establishing a Cooperative Innovative High School Program. Students will utilize a computer-based curriculum in conjunction with project-based learning to master the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*. Students attending the Performance Learning Center will be matched with a community-based mentor and will complete a Personal Life plan designed to enable them to succeed in school and in life. At-risk students who are in danger of dropping out will be able to catch up academically or move ahead at their own pace. Students will be prepared to succeed both in college and in the workplace. Parent involvement, participation in college courses, and business internships are also integral components of the program.

Addressing Policy Barriers Facing Learn and Earn Early College High Schools

Cooperative Innovative High School programs represent a bold new vision for high schools in a number of ways. They seek to build on best practices in workforce development and tech prep to provide students with work-based experiences and significant progress through college at the same time. Most importantly, Cooperative Innovative High Schools programs will leverage secondary-postsecondary partnerships to provide access to college for all students. The table that follows lists exemptions [G.S. 115C-238.53(f)] requested by the schools to facilitate implementation.

ATTACHMENT PROG.

Exemption	LEAs	Rationale	Recommendation*
1. Allow the ECHS to be exempt from strict instructional hour requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayne Early/Middle College High School Performance Learning Center 	The current policy of instructional clock hours may prevent the ability to blend course curriculum, restructure courses to increase opportunities for experiential and project-based learning, or allow for differential independent learning.	<i>Grant exemption.</i>
2. Allow and grant FTE reimbursements to RCC for RECHS students taking coursework in the summer sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Early College High School 	Encourages acceleration and allows opportunities for credit recovery if needed.	<i>Grant exemption to LEAs that are willing to assume the cost.</i>
3. Allow ECHS student enrollment (with FTE reimbursement) in developmental courses where necessary to establish prerequisite skill levels for required coursework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Early College High School 	Provides additional measure of support for the diverse student population of the early college high school model.	<i>Grant exemption with approval of State Board of Community Colleges.</i>
4. Allow ECHS students to count college classes that are equivalent to high school classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilmington Early College High School 	Since this is the student's high school that is located on the college campus, this seems reasonable.	<i>Grant exemption.</i>
5. Allow the community college to develop a course needed by students in the program (and open to other, non-high school students), even though such a course is available from at least one high school in the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davie County Early College High School 	The ECHS is now the high school for these students and is located on the college campus. It would not be efficient for students to have to return to a school campus to get a designated course.	<i>Grant exemption.</i> <i>(Principal serves as the gate keeper.)</i>
6. Waive the requirement for EOC scores of students "simultaneously enrolled" in more than one school to be counted where the course is taught.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davie County Early College High School 	Local control.	<i>Grant exemption.</i>
7. Allow the NC principal certification requirements to be waived.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davie County Early College High School Cato Middle College High School Polk County Virtual Early College High School 	Granted by the State Board of Education in the past.	<i>Grant exemption.</i>
8. Provide relief from a reduction in transportation efficiency ratings caused by the bussing of students to the community college campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davie County Early College High School Wayne Early/Middle College High School Richmond Early College High School Wilmington Early College High School 	Documented excess transportation costs will be reimbursed.	<i>Do not grant exemption.</i>

<p>9. Allow students to count a college health class and a college physical education class for the health and physical education graduation requirement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burke Middle College • Davie County Early College High School • Wayne Early/Middle College High School • Lenoir County Early College High School • Richmond Early College High School 	<p>Since this is the students' high school that is located on the college campus, this seems reasonable.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption.</i></p>
<p>10. Allow students to count a college class for core graduation requirements provided they pass the EOC for the course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davie County Early College High School • Surry Early College High School • Lenoir County Early College High School • Richmond Early College High School • Macon Early College 	<p>Since this is the student's high school that is located on the college campus, this seems reasonable.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption.</i></p>
<p>11. Allow students to enroll in summer community college courses for which they are eligible even if they have not taken the equivalent of one-half or a full-time schedule of high school classes during the preceding year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davie County Early College High School • Lenoir County Early College High School • Richmond Early College High School 	<p>Community colleges will not be able to fund their enrollment. LEAs would have to fund with local funds.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption to LEAs that are willing to use local funds to do so.</i></p>
<p>12. Allow full-time students who are enrolled in one high school course to enroll in more than one community college course for which they are eligible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davie County Early College High School • Surry Early College High School • Lenoir County Early College High School • Richmond Early College High School 	<p>This is acceleration and is one of the purposes of the Cooperative Innovative High School Program.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption.</i></p>
<p>13. Allow the partners to develop curriculum that permits students to meet graduation requirements using college-level courses taught by college faculty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davie County Early College High School • Richmond Early College High School 	<p>A review panel (personnel from DPI and the four higher education entities) should be established to review and approve such courses. A catalog could be established and disseminated for use by other reforming high schools.</p>	<p><i>Grant waiver contingent upon courses being developed and approved by the panel.</i></p>
<p>14. Allow students to take college foreign language courses to meet the high school foreign language graduation requirement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burke Middle College • Surry Early College High School • Wilmington Early College High School 	<p>Due to the small staff of the ECHS, it is not possible to offer foreign languages to our students. We would like for them to be able to take advantage of the courses offered at the college.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption.</i></p>

15. Allow the school to establish a school calendar that aligns with the community college calendar which allows the ECHS to meet the academic needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Early/Middle College High School • Lenoir County Early College High School • Performance Learning Center • Wilmington Early College High School 	There is an established procedure for this purpose.	<i>No action is required by the SBE. Calendar waivers for educational purposes should be submitted.</i>
16. Allow ECHS to develop testing calendars for the administration of state tests in order to meet instructional calendar needs as well as the individual needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Early/Middle College High School • Richmond Early College High School • Wilmington Early College High School • Performance Learning Center 	Accountability Services has established a process by which reforming high school can request this exemption.	<i>No action is required by SBE. Requests are referred to Accountability Services.</i>
17. Fund the principal at Early College High School using a different formula than the per teacher basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Early/Middle College High School • Wilmington Early College High School • Polk County Virtual Early College High School 	State funds are not available for this purpose.	<i>Grant exemption to LEAs that are willing to use local funds to do so.</i>
18. Allow the Wayne Community College and Wayne Public Schools to develop curriculum that permits students to meet graduation requirements using college-level courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Early/Middle College High School 	A review panel (personnel from DPI and the three higher education entities) should be established to review and approve such courses. A catalog could be established and disseminated for use by other high schools.	<i>Grant waiver contingent upon courses being developed and approved by the panel.</i>
19. Allow the partners to restructure courses to increase opportunities for experimental and project-based learning as well as differentiated independent learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Early/Middle College High School • Lenoir County Early College High School 	A review panel (personnel from DPI and the three higher education entities) should be established to review and approve such courses. A catalog could be established and disseminated for use by other high schools.	<i>Grant waiver contingent upon courses being developed and approved by the panel.</i>
20. Allow Wayne Community College instructors meeting Wayne Community College faculty requirements to teach high school subjects in their subject area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Early/Middle College High School 	Only teachers who are employed by the LEA/school count in determining the percentage of teachers being highly qualified under NCLB. If the teachers are employed by the community college, they are not considered in determining the number of teachers highly qualified at the high school.	<i>Exemption not required.</i>
21. Allow the ECHS to “blend” high school and community college courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lenoir County Early College High School • Wilmington Early College High School 	DPI and the Community College system should establish a process for reviewing and approving such courses.	<i>Grant waiver contingent upon courses being developed and approved by the panel.</i>

<p>22. Allow Early College High School students to test out of required high school courses by taking and passing the End-of-Course test at a B level or higher. (Students would still need to complete the required number of graduation credits.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macon Early College 	<p>Testing out of EOC courses should occur based on a certain standard – student must earn a B or better.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption for testing out of required high school courses by taking and passing EOC courses at a B level (for ECHS students only).</i></p>
<p>23. Permit students to receive credit for Algebra I when taken and successfully completed in grade eight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burke Middle College • Macon Early College 	<p>Algebra I taken in the eighth grade does not count toward graduation.</p>	<p><i>Grant exemption (contingent upon State Board action to make this policy).</i></p>