

"Article 6D.

"B-3 Interagency Council.

"§ 115C-64.25. Establishment and membership of B-3 Interagency Council.

(a) There is established the B-3 Interagency Council. The Council is a joint council between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Public Instruction and shall consist of 12 voting members and four nonvoting advisory members as follows:

- (1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent's designee shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (2) The Associate Superintendent of Early Education at the Department of Public Instruction shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Secretary's designee shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (4) The Deputy Secretary of Human Services at the Department of Health and Human Services shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (5) Four public members appointed by the Speaker of House of Representatives who represent organizations that focus on early childhood education and development, one of whom shall be a representative of Smart Start.
- (6) Four public members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate who represent organizations that focus on early childhood education and development, one of whom shall be a representative of the North Carolina Partnership for Children.
- (7) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to serve as nonvoting advisory members.
- (8) Two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate to serve as nonvoting advisory members.

The Deputy Secretary of Human Services and the Associate Superintendent of Early Education shall serve as cochair of the Council. Members of the Council shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowance, as provided in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

(b) Terms for all public members and advisory members except for the initial appointments shall be for four years. Two of the public members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to subdivision (5) of subsection (a) of this section and one of the advisory members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to subdivision (7) of subsection (a) of this section shall be appointed for an initial term of two years. Two of the public members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate pursuant to subdivision (6) of subsection (a) of this section and one of the advisory members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate pursuant to subdivision (8) of subsection (a) of this section shall be appointed for an initial term of two years. Terms for members shall begin on November 1. Members shall serve until their successors are appointed. Any vacancy in the membership of the Council shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(c) The Council shall have as its charge establishing a vision and accountability for a birth through grade three system of early education that addresses all of the following:

- (1) Standards and assessment.
- (2) Data-driven improvement and outcomes, including shared accountability measures such as the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading.
- (3) Teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness.
- (4) Instruction and environment.
- (5) Transitions and continuity.
- (6) Family engagement.
- (7) Governance and funding.

"§ 115C-64.26. Powers and duties of B-3 Interagency Council.

The B-3 Interagency Council shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) Facilitating the development and implementation of an interagency plan for a coordinated system of early care, education, and child development services with a focus on program outcomes in satisfying the developmental and educational needs of all children from birth to eight years of age that includes at least the following:
 - a. Any recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Superintendent of Public Instruction on necessary organizational changes needed within the Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction to be more responsive to and supportive of the birth to grade three continuum of early learning and development in an effort to optimize learning gains realized in the prekindergarten years.
 - b. An early childhood information system that facilitates and encourages the sharing of data between and among early childhood service providers and State agencies.
 - c. An early childhood accountability plan that includes identification of appropriate population indicators and program and system performance measures of early success of children such as the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading.
- (2) Implementing a statewide longitudinal evaluation of the educational progress of children from prekindergarten programs through grade 12.
- (3) Collaborating with the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Health and Human Services, the North Carolina Partnership for Children, and other relevant early childhood stakeholders, including members of the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council, to achieve the goal of a coordinated system of early care, education, and child development services for children from birth to eight years of age.

"§ 115C-64.27. Reporting requirement.

The Deputy Secretary of Human Services and the Associate Superintendent of Early Education shall report on a quarterly basis to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Superintendent of Public Instruction on the progress and implementation of any of the duties and responsibilities of the Council as set forth in this Article.

"§ 115C-64.28. Establish position of Associate Superintendent of Early Education to serve as chief academic officer of early education.

(a) There is established within the Department of Public Instruction the position of Associate Superintendent of Early Education who shall serve as the chief academic officer of early education. The Associate Superintendent shall have professional, administrative, technical, and clerical personnel as may be necessary to assist in carrying out his or her duties. The Associate Superintendent shall co-lead the work of the B-3 Interagency Council and oversee the Department of Public Instruction's prekindergarten through third grade initiatives.

(b) The Associate Superintendent shall be appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction at a salary established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction within the funds appropriated for that purpose. The Associate Superintendent may be removed from the position by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the event of the Associate Superintendent's incapacity to serve. The Associate Superintendent shall be exempt from the provisions of Chapter 126 of the General Statutes, except for Articles 6 and 7 of Chapter 126 of the General Statutes.

All other staff shall be appointed, supervised, and directed by the Associate Superintendent and shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 126 of the General Statutes. Except for the Associate Superintendent, salaries and compensation of all staff personnel shall be fixed in the manner provided by law for fixing and regulating salaries and compensation by other State agencies."

SECTION 7.231.(b) G.S. 126-5(c1) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(35) The Associate Superintendent of Early Education who serves as chief academic officer of early education."

SECTION 7.23I.(c) The B-3 Interagency Council, established under G.S. 115C-64.25, as enacted by this section, shall undertake a rigorous review of the recommendations developed by the Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction, pursuant to Section 12B.5 of S.L. 2016-94, on (i) the development and implementation of a statewide vision for early childhood education and (ii) the development and implementation of a program for transitioning children from preschool to kindergarten. In its review, the B-3 Interagency Council shall report to the General Assembly and the Governor suggested modifications, if any, to those recommendations. The B-3 Interagency Council shall also, if deemed necessary, make suggestions on alternative organizational structures to achieve greater efficiency and effective delivery of early childhood services, including a consolidation and restructuring of State agency divisions and offices located within the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Human Services into a centralized agency or office. The Council shall consider at least the following in conducting the review and study:

- (1) The delivery of educational services to young children and their families to ensure optimal learning for each young child.
- (2) The collaboration and sharing of data elements necessary to perform quality assessments and longitudinal analysis across early childhood education and development services.
- (3) The coordination of a comprehensive statewide system of professional development for providers and staff of early care and education and child development programs and services.
- (4) Areas of duplication in regulating and monitoring of early care and education and child development programs and services.
- (5) The coordination and support of public and private partnerships to aid early childhood initiatives.

SECTION 7.23I.(d) By April 15, 2018, the B-3 Interagency Council shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations on the initial results of the review and study required under subsection (c) of this section. By February 15, 2019, the B-3 Interagency Council shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations on (i) the final results of the review and study, including its recommendations and any proposed legislation, and (ii) progress on the development and implementation of a plan for a coordinated system of early care, education, and child development services and any other activities prescribed under G.S. 115C-64.26, as enacted by this section.

SECTION 7.23I.(e) Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-64.28, as enacted by this section, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall appoint an Associate Superintendent of Early Education within 60 days of the date this section becomes law.

SECTION 7.23I.(f) Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-64.27, as enacted by this section, the B-3 Interagency Council shall submit its initial quarterly report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services by May 15, 2018.