

Article 29A.

University of North Carolina Laboratory Schools.

§ 116-239.5. University of North Carolina laboratory schools; purpose.

(a) The Board of Governors, upon recommendation by the President, shall designate constituent institutions to submit proposals to establish at least nine laboratory schools in total to serve public school students in accordance with the provisions of this Article. The Board of Governors shall select constituent institutions with high-quality educator preparation programs as demonstrated by the annual performance measures reported by the constituent institutions in accordance with G.S. 115C-296.35. The Board of Governors' Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools established under G.S. 116-239.7 shall review the proposals and approve at least nine of the proposals to establish laboratory schools. The Subcommittee may select a constituent institution to operate more than one laboratory school. The Subcommittee shall oversee the operations of those laboratory schools to meet the purposes set forth in this Article.

(b) The mission of a laboratory school shall be to improve student performance in local school administrative units with low-performing schools by providing an enhanced education program for students residing in those units and to provide exposure and training for teachers and principals to successfully address challenges existing in high-needs school settings. A laboratory school shall provide an opportunity for research, demonstration, student support, and expansion of the teaching experience and evaluation regarding management, teaching, and learning.

(c) Each laboratory school shall expand student opportunities for educational success through high-quality instructional programming and innovative instruction and research by using the resources available to the constituent institution. Each constituent institution operating a laboratory school shall incorporate best practices gained from State initiatives focused on leadership development for both teachers and principals in low-performing schools and local school administrative units.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in this Article and Article 7B of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, the Subcommittee, the chancellor of each constituent institution that operates a laboratory school, and the laboratory school are exempt from statutes and rules applicable to a local board of education or local school administrative unit.

(e) In addition to all other immunities provided to them by applicable State law, the Subcommittee, chancellor, the constituent institution, an advisory board, and a laboratory school, and their members, employees, and agents shall be entitled to the specific immunities provided for in Chapter 115C of the General Statutes applying to the State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, a local board of education, a local school administrative unit, and their members and employees. Any such immunity to liability established by this subsection shall not extend to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be actionable. Immunity established by this subsection shall be deemed to be waived to the extent of indemnification under Article 31A and Article 31B of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes and to the extent sovereign immunity is waived under the Tort Claims Act, as set forth in Article 31 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. (2016-94, s. 11.6(a); 2017-117, s. 1; 2017-189, s. 6(h); 2020-56, s. 2(a), (b); 2023-106, s. 2(f).)