

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 837

Short Title: Outdoor Learning Center Pilot/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Torbett, and Horn (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Appropriations

April 13, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO PROVIDE FOR AN OUTDOOR LEARNING  
3 CENTER PILOT PROGRAM THROUGH REAL SCHOOL GARDENS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
6 Public Instruction the sum of six hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$650,000) for the 2017-2018  
7 fiscal year for use by REAL School Gardens to establish a three-year pilot program, beginning  
8 with the 2017-2018 school year and ending with the 2019-2020 school year. The purpose of the  
9 pilot program is to transform designated outdoor spaces into outdoor learning centers, based on  
10 the national model developed by REAL School Gardens, in elementary schools operating a  
11 school-wide Title I program in the following local school administrative units: Cabarrus  
12 County Schools, Kannapolis City Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Gaston County  
13 Schools, and Union County Schools. Based on data from use of the national model developed  
14 by REAL School Gardens, the pilot program shall concentrate on improving student academic  
15 performance, teacher effectiveness, student engagement, and improving health and behavioral  
16 issues of students. Funds made available to REAL School Gardens under this section may be  
17 used for teacher training and utilizing REAL School Gardens NC Essential Standards aligned  
18 curriculum, focusing on science, math, and literacy skills while providing nutrition education to  
19 support healthy eating habits through project-based learning. State funds shall only be used to  
20 operate and administer the pilot program.

21 **SECTION 1.(b)** As used in this section, a school-wide Title I program is a  
22 program at a school identified under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary  
23 Education Act of 1965, as amended.

24 **SECTION 1.(c)** The funds appropriated in subsection (a) of this section shall not  
25 revert at the end of the each fiscal year but shall remain available for expenditure until the end  
26 of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

27 **SECTION 1.(d)** By October 1, 2018, and annually thereafter until October 1, 2020,  
28 REAL School Gardens shall submit to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee  
29 and the Fiscal Research Division of the General Assembly a report on the progress of the pilot  
30 program, an accounting of expenditures, and student outcome and teacher effectiveness data  
31 related to the operation of the pilot program.

32 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2017.

