



2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

PRIORITY ONE: STUDENT LEARNING AND INNOVATION

Phase-In of New K-3 Class-Size Mandates

1. Provide additional exceptions for hardship circumstances, such as lack of facility space, lack of licensed teachers to hire, and/or late enrollments that could require classes to be reorganized well into the school year.
2. Provide dedicated funding to address facility needs created by new requirements.

Categorical Funding

1. Increase funding for school resource officers and other safety measures.
2. Invest in professional development to ensure students have teachers and administrators highly trained in the latest instructional methods.
3. Increase support for students identified as Academically or Intellectually Gifted, Exceptional Children, and Limited English Proficiency by eliminating funding caps.
4. Provide additional funding to support schools designated as low-performing.
5. Prevent the 2018 earmarked \$4 million cut to central office allotment. This planned cut, if not reversed, would reduce critical district-level administrative oversight and support back to 1995-1996.

PRIORITY TWO: QUALITY TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND OTHER STAFF

Pipeline Shortage

Consider ways to smartly reduce barriers to licensure and entry into the teaching profession to help districts address classroom staffing challenges. One specific method of doing this would be to allow districts to accept an out-of-state teacher's license without additional testing if the candidate has classroom experience. Another strategy would be to provide additional alternative pathways.

Teachers' Salary Schedule

Continue improving teacher pay across the board, particularly with respect to those with the most experience, to ensure that our state is regionally and nationally competitive. In addition to ensuring base salaries are strong, lawmakers should reinstate salary supplements for teachers with graduate degrees.

Principals' Salary Schedule

Increase the base salary of all principals to ensure that it is more competitive with compensation offered by neighboring states in the Southeast. Consider:

1. Add an experience factor to the base level salary.

2. Extend the “hold harmless” provisions to ensure that pay does not dip below 2016-2017 total state compensation for any principal or assistant principal in future years.
3. Add a grandfather clause to allow current school-based administrators who held a doctoral or advanced degree or were enrolled in a related program as of July 1, 2016, to continue to receive a supplement for such degrees.
4. Recognize the additional oversight and challenges associated with leading large schools by adding new tiers in based principal pay for schools with 1,300-1,699 students and 1,700-plus students.
5. Extend the “hold harmless” provisions to ensure that pay does not dip below 2016-2017 total state compensation for any principal or assistant principal in future years.

Compensation for other Personnel

School districts need to be able to offer competitive compensation in this area as many of these positions, like licensed positions, are difficult to recruit and retain.

PRIORITY THREE: GROWTH AND FUTURE PLANNING

Assistance to local counties for school facilities has significantly decreased over time. In 2015-2016, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction identified \$8.1 billion in school capital needs over the next five years. Chatham County is projected to continue growing. That reality coupled with the new class size limits will undoubtedly create ever greater facility needs.

PRIORITY FOUR: CALENDAR FLEXIBILITY

North Carolina’s traditional public schools are subject to calendar restrictions. We recommend the following:

1. Provide local boards of education with the same flexibility granted to charter schools in adopting a school calendar that best meets the needs of their students and their individual local communities.
2. Allow public school calendars to align with those of nearby community colleges and universities to facilitate dual enrollment of high school students in higher-level courses and completion of the first semester and related testing before the winter break.
3. Enhance family time by ensuring that all first semester end-of-course exams can be administered before the winter break so that students are not studying for, or worried about, high-stakes testing during the holidays in December and early January.