



A REPORT FROM OUR LOBBYIST

Now that the school year has officially begun, the top priority for NCMEA continues to be full funding for the General Assembly's class size reductions for the 2018-19 school year. This issue was covered in an August 25 News & Observer article entitled, "[Why your young student's class is smaller this year – and who is paying the price.](#)" The state NCDPI conference on September 9, [Arts R4 Life](#), holds promise to highlight the state funding priorities for Music Educators and other Arts Educators statewide. By the end of October, each local board of education through its superintendent must file a much more detailed Class Size report than in prior years based on HB 13 and HB 155 which are now law. For example, principals of each school will soon be collecting all of the following information, if they have not begun already:

- (1) For each class in each grade level at each school, the following:
 - a. The duties of the teacher.
 - b. The source of funds used to pay for the teacher.
 - c. The number of students assigned to the class, including all exceptions to individual class size maximums in kindergarten through third grade that exist at that time.
- (2) For each school, the following:
 - a. The number of program enhancement teachers. For the purposes of this subdivision, program enhancement teachers are teachers who teach any of the following:
 1. Arts disciplines, including dance, music, theater, and the visual arts.
 2. Physical education and health programs.
 3. World languages.
 - b. The source of funds used to pay each program enhancement teacher.
- (3) The average class size for each grade from kindergarten through third grade in the local school administrative unit.
- (4) Any other information the Superintendent of Public Instruction may require.

HB 13 ([SL 2017-9](#)) as amended by HB 155 ([SL 2017-157](#), Part I). For more detailed guidance, as presented at NCDPI's Financial & Business Services Division Summer Conference, please see its July 2017 [Class Size Update](#).

Other summer legislative activity involving education bills included the following:

- HB 704 ([Session Law 2017-198](#)) Divide School Systems/Study Committee
This bill became law without the Governor's signature as his 30 days to take action expired. This law establishes a Joint Legislative Study Committee on the possible division of school systems.
- HB 770 ([Session Law 2017-206](#)) Various Clarifying Changes
Both Chambers recently overrode the Governor's veto and this bill is now law. Among many unrelated provisions, the education component modifies the A-F School Performance Grades, including a clause to further ensure compliance with the federal law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- SB 55 ([Session Law 2017-188](#)) School Bus Cameras/Civil Penalties

Under this new law, local school boards and county authorities are now authorized to use automated school bus safety cameras to affirmatively establish evidence of violators of the law against passing a stopped school bus. The law authorizes the creation of new local ordinances and fines for violating this important school bus safety law.

- SB 628 ([Session Law 2017-204](#)) Various Changes to the Revenue Laws

This bill became law in August. Of the many tax law changes, it grants a tax exemption for mobile units used as public school property exclusively for educational purposes.

- SB 689 ([Session Law 2017-201](#)) Appointments Bill Modifications

Of those education-related appointments to Boards and Commissions under this new law, there are appointees to the following: 1) the new Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission under [SB 599](#); and 2) the re-created NC Teaching Fellows Commission.

For a comprehensive list of education-related legislation that is regularly updated, please see the NC State Board of Education’s (SBE’s) running chart of [2017 Education Legislation](#). Additionally, for a chart of new education studies and task forces, etc., enacted by the General Assembly this year, please see below.

Education Studies, Committees, Commissions & Task Forces

	Effective Date	Study/Commission	Report Date
		K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION	
1.	July 2017	New Student Mental Health Work Group Superintendent of Public Instruction	April 1, 2018
2.	July 2017	New Testing Transparency Report How SAT & ACT align with NC Standard Course of Study [S257]	February 1, 2018
3.	July 2017	New School Bus Driver Compensation & Employment Study [S257]	April 1, 2018
4.	July 2017	New Study of Opportunity Scholarships [S257]	March 1, 2018
5.	July 2017	New Study on Division of Local School Administrative Units [H704]	May 1, 2018
6.	July 2017	New NCDPI Study of costs to local school systems of compliance with federal education funding mandates [S78]	January 2018
7.	July 2017	New Report to the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission – Career & Technical Education Grade Expansion Program for 6 th and 7 th Grades [S257]	October 15 each year
8.	July 2017	Each local board of education must appoint a Business Advisory Council [S257]	Terms begin on January 1, 2018
9.	Fall 2017	New DPI Audit by independent research organization [S257]	May 1, 2018
10.	July 2017	New Reading Improvement Commission Grades 4-12 best practices. [S257]	January 15, 2019
11.	July 2017	New K-12 Computer Science Study [H155]	January 15, 2018

12.	August 2017	New Professional Educator Preparation & Standards Commission [S599]	ongoing
13.	August 2017	NC Teaching Fellows Commission [S257]	April 2018 – 1st scholarship awards
14.	August 2017	New Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund Study [H528]	February 1, 2018
15.	Sept 2017	New Task Force - Education Finance Reform [S257]	October 2018
16.	Sept 2017	New B-3 Interagency Council Birth – 3 yrs Early Education Council [S257]	April & May 2018
HIGHER EDUCATION			
17.	July 2017	Future Teachers of North Carolina UNC System [S257]	February 2018 – site applications & teacher training
18.	2017	Workforce Training Costs Study [S257]	September 2017
19.	2017	New Board of Postsecondary Education Credentials, Community Colleges [S257]	March 1, 2018

While the General Assembly was busy with its redistricting plans in August, it plans to re-convene in early October.

Finally, on September 6-7, 2017, SBE will conduct its monthly meeting. One of the big ticket items on its agenda will be the new (sixth) draft of NC's ESSA plan. NCDPI plans to publicly post this newest, and perhaps final, version by September 6 on its [website](#). The Governor has added comments to the State Plan, and NCDPI staff will recommend that SBE approve it for submission to the US Department of Education by the September 18, 2017 deadline.

Submitted by:
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