



PERKINSON LAW FIRM

NCMEA Lobbyist Report

July 2018

The General Assembly adjourned on Friday, June 29, with an Adjournment Resolution that has legislators returning on Tuesday, November 27, 2018, at noon. Notably, this will be just a few weeks after Election Day on November 6.

The most important piece of legislation for NC Music Educators enacted by the General Assembly this summer was the state budget, Senate Bill 99 ([Session Law 2018-5](#)). Some of the key highlights include:

Salary Increases

- An *average* salary increase of 6.5% for teachers (increases range from \$0 - \$6,450)
- \$700/year increase for veteran teachers with 25+ years experience
- Continues the hold harmless provision (2013-14 salary schedule + longevity + \$1,000 bonus)
- For some veteran teachers with 25+ years experience who do not receive a state-funded salary increase under the 2018-19 schedule (e.g., those paid under the hold harmless provision above), they are eligible for a \$385 bonus paid by October 31, 2018

For more detailed information, please see NCDPI's Financial & Business Services analyses:

[2018-19 Teacher Salary Schedule, Budget Summary](#), and other [FY 2018-19 Budget Information](#).

Other

- \$23 million for new School Safety Grants
- \$5 million for a statewide anonymous tip hotline for student safety threats
- Increased funding for 1,800 new Pre-K slots for eligible children
- Report deadline extended one year to October 1, 2019, for the Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform to submit its recommendations on moving to a weighted student formula
- 1% Cost-of-Living one-time supplement for retirees
- Maintained \$5.1 million cut to DPI agency budget, but set aside \$3 million for severance
- No increase for Instructional Supplies allotment

House Bill 90 ([SL 2018-2](#))

As a reminder of the Class Size legislation enacted in March 2018, below are the relevant provisions for this upcoming school year. NCMEA will continue to monitor the implementation of this law, especially regarding funding for Music Educators and classroom space/capacity over the 3-year phase-in of the class size reductions.

- For 2018-19 only:
 - Applicable K-3 *average* class size cannot exceed 1:20
 - Applicable K-3 *individual* class sizes cannot exceed 1:23
- “Program Enhancement Teacher Allotment”
 - \$61M (recurring) for 2018-19
 - Allotment ratio at 1:191 K-5 Average Daily Membership (ADM), approximate funding for 954 teachers
- K-3 Class Size Exceptions
 - “Program Enhancement” classes
 - Dual language immersion classes

Additionally, the Public School Building Bond Act ([HB 866/SB 542](#)) did not pass. This would have provided \$1.9 billion for public school building construction and renovations statewide. With regard to the class size reductions over the next 3 years, classroom space generally, among other reasons, a statewide school bond bill will become increasingly important. NCDPI has estimated the school building/construction needs at \$8.1 billion over the next few years. While the General Assembly did appropriate approximately \$117 million in Education Lottery revenues for competitive grants to certain eligible Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties under a new Needs-Based Public School Building Capital Fund, this does not fulfill statewide school construction needs.

ESSA State Plan Approval

[North Carolina’s Plan](#) under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was approved by the US Department of Education on June 5, 2018. The plan calls for the state to support individualized instruction and learning for both students and educators while continuing to explore and promote emerging initiatives for personalized learning.

The state’s plan includes these key elements, among others:

- The innovation the state expects for students, including using adaptive environments, personalized learning, and empowered educators.
- 10-year goals for student performance using end-of-grade and end-of-course exams and goals for closing achievement gaps.
- The School Performance Grades model, in which schools earn A-F grades based on proficiency measures and student-growth targets.

Other education-related bills that have been passed during this Short Session include:

- [Various Changes to Education Laws](#) (HB 986/SL 2018-32)

Places further requirements on the State Board of Education's (SBE's) Annual Report on Cursive Writing and Multiplication Tables. It automatically enrolls students in the next advanced mathematics course when students score a Level 5 on the end-of-grade/course test, unless the parent/guardian opts out. It clarifies that the Educator Preparation Program Report Cards are generated by SBE. It requires the State Superintendent to study ways to reduce testing and report by January 15, 2019. It repeals the SBE policy on the School Mental Health Initiative (SHLT-003) and requires the Superintendent to report on a new program by October 15, 2018. It creates a new "Renewal School System" in the Rowan-Salisbury Schools System.

- [Protect Educational Property](#) (HB 670/SL 2018-72)

Increases criminal penalties for anyone who communicates a threat of mass violence on educational property or at a place of religious worship, with special conditions for individuals who are convicted of this offense when they are less than 20 years old.

- [Local Ed Funding Dispute Process](#) (HB 1031/SL 2018-83)

Limits a local school board's ability to file a lawsuit against its local county commissioners challenging the sufficiency of local funds appropriated to the schools and sets forth a new formula of the amount that would have to be paid in the event a budget dispute is not resolved by mediation.

- [Constitutional Amendment- Max Income Tax Rate of 7.0%](#) (SB 75/SL 2018-119)

Places a constitutional amendment on the November 6, 2018 statewide ballot capping the allowable state income tax rate at 7%. NC's constitution currently caps it at 10%.

- [Various Changes to Education](#) (SB 125/SL 2018-37)

Encourages local school boards to adopt student attendance recognition programs that would not exclude students who serve as Legislative or Governor's pages when they are absent from school for that purpose. It also expands scholarship eligibility for children of wartime veterans.

- [Budget Technical Corrections & Study](#) (SB 335/SL 2018-97)

This 28-page bill contains a host of budget corrections, including further education provisions. Some of these include: 1) a clarification of which school growth scores are used for the new Principal Pay plan; 2) moving the Center for Safer Schools directly under the State Superintendent's supervision; 3) holding harmless the Office of Charter Schools from the budget cuts to DPI; 4) exempting estate proceeds from income calculations for Opportunity Scholarships; 5) slightly revising the A-F School Performance Grades for one year only (for grades issued from 2017-18 data) by combining the career and college readiness measures so that

a high school would earn one point for each percent of students who are either college or career ready; and more.

- [Employment Contract Exception](#) (HB 611/SL 2018-26)

Creates an exception for allowable employment contracts of spouses of superintendents of local school administrative units when the local board of education approves the employment.