



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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Budget Moving

The NC General Assembly this week teed up the budget plan with the idea of getting in place for the new fiscal year, which begins today. Here are some education highlights of the \$22.3 billion plan that tweaks the second year of the already-approved, two-year budget as reported by The Insider:

State Salaries:

- Public school teachers would get an average of 4.7 percent raises. All current teachers would receive a raise, ranging from \$750 to \$5,250, depending on years of experience and where they sit on the most common salary schedule.
- Rank-and-file state employees would get 1.5 percent raises and bonuses equal to 0.5 percent of their income. There's also another pot of money equal to 1 percent of salaries that would be distributed by agencies based on merit-based standards.
- Public retirees would get cost-of-living bonuses equal to 1.6 percent of their annual payments.

Public Schools:

- \$10 million pilot program giving third-grade reading teachers bonuses whose student growth scores rank in the top 25 percent of similar teachers statewide and in each school district. A teacher could get bonuses of up to \$6,800.
- Teach an additional 5,875 students projected to enter the public schools statewide this fall, at a price tag of \$46.8 million.
- Use \$57.3 million more in state lottery funds to pay the salaries of public school clerical workers, custodians and support staff, on top of the \$315 million in lottery funds for non-instructional personnel already approved for the coming year.
- \$4.9 million for a two-year pilot program to give teachers \$25 or \$50 bonuses for each student that receives good grades on Advanced

Placement and International Baccalaureate course tests or on **career and technical credentialing tests**.

- \$2.5 million more for instructional supplies, materials and equipment, bringing the total to \$47 million.
- Accelerate carrying out the state's Digital Learning Plan for the public schools with \$4.7 million.
- Raise textbook and digital materials spending by \$10 million to \$71.5 million.
- Reduce public school central office administrative spending by \$2.5 million to \$92.6 million.
- \$5 million more for North Carolina Educational Endowment Fund, intended to give bonuses to public school teachers.
- Create tuition reimbursement program for 25 teacher assistants in five counties pursuing a college degree and teacher's license.
- Raise funding for special education scholarships for children with disabilities to attend private school or receive tutoring by \$5.8 million to \$10 million.
- Set aside \$34.8 million to pay for scholarships for low-income K-12 students to attend private or religious schools, with plans to raise it annually by \$10 million through mid-2028.

More Background: The GOP-led General Assembly plan raises pay for teachers and state employees and offer an income tax break to those who don't itemize on their returns. The plan does meet Gov. Pat McCrory's plan of raising average teacher pay -- from state and other sources -- above \$50,000 this fall, according to legislators.

Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said during floor debate this week: "On balance, this is the best budget that I've seen in the 16 years that I've been here." Democrats acknowledged there were some good items in the budget, like teacher pay raises of 4.7 percent on average, but they also they criticized nearly \$35 million inside the plan to expand taxpayer funded-scholarships to K-12 students in low-income families. The measure projects \$10 million increases annually for the next decade.

[Update HB 657 Status](#)

House Does Not Concur: The state House, in a 110-0 vote with little discussion, failed to concur on June 22 with the [Senate-amended version of HB 657](#), setting up a House-Senate conferees committee to be named to try to work out differences. The good news for CTE is twofold:

- [The Senate-passed bill](#) – approved in a 33-13 vote on June 16 and sent back to the House – removed language that NCACTE had opposed that would have disallowed the use of a CTE math course to satisfy a graduation requirement for a fourth credit in math. That objectionable language had been in a [previous version of the bill](#) before it was removed in the version that cleared the Senate.

Last month, the House-passed was amended in a Senate committee with new language that would have been harmful as CTE courses that currently are counted for math credit generally no longer would be. NCACTE helped lead a charge to remove from the bill the

objectionable language – and that happened on the Senate floor before it was sent back to the House. [The initial House-passed bill](#), “Study UNC-Fixed Tuition,” did not have the CTE language in it that NCACTE opposed.

Where Things Stand: As of late Wednesday House and Senate conferees were appointed and they are:

House

- [Rep. Jeffrey Elmore](#), **House Chair**
- [Rep. Linda P. Johnson](#)
- [Rep. D. Craig Horn](#)
- [Rep. Debra Conrad](#)
- [Rep. James H. Langdon, Jr.](#)
- [Rep. Chris Millis](#)

Senate

- [Sen. Jerry W. Tillman](#), **Senate Chair**
- [Sen. Chad Barefoot](#)
- [Sen. Michael V. Lee](#)
- [Sen. Joyce Krawiec](#)
- [Sen. Erica Smith-Ingram](#)

Quote of the Week

"That makes me want to be a third-grade teacher."

- Sen. Harry Brown, R-Onslow, talking about budget provisions that would give the best third-grade teachers the opportunity to earn \$6,800 bonuses (The Insider, 6/28/16)



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