



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

May 15, 2017, #676

Senate Passes Budget Bill in Pre-Dawn Hours

House Work Begins on its Budget Bill: In a 32-15 vote Friday along party lines, the Senate approved a \$22.9 billion budget that would include:

- Pay increases for rank-and-file state employees of the greater of 1.5 percent of their salaries or \$750: \$142 million.
- An average 3.7 percent increase in teacher salaries: \$131 million.
- Using \$24 million from the lottery to increase principal compensation and create a new salary schedule on experience and performance.
- Assistant principal pay increases: \$4.5 million.
- Eliminating retiree medical benefits for new state employees hired after June 2018.
- Funding to teach an additional 9,120 students expected in the public schools this fall: \$31.9 million.
- A new "driver safety incentive program" that reimburses students up to \$275 for a public or private driver education course to obtain a learner's permit, while eliminating the \$65 cap school districts can currently charge students for such training: \$25.8 million.
- Funding for classroom textbooks and digital materials: \$11.1 million.
- Expanding bonus programs for teachers with students in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and industry certification classes to charter schools: \$400,000.
- Modernizing the Department of Public Instruction business systems: \$18.8 million.
- Reimbursing initial teacher licensure application fee for first-time applicants: \$245,000.
- Funding up to five positions in the Superintendent of Public Instruction's office: \$433,000.

- Slicing funding by 25 percent to Department of Public Instruction, with spending reductions determined by agency: -\$13.2 million.
- Eliminating four State Board of Education staff positions: -\$513,000.
- Reducing funding to North Carolina Education Endowment Fund for start-up to reinstate N.C. Teaching Fellows Program: -\$4.6 million.
- Expanding NC Works Career Coaches, employed by community colleges, to work with high school students: \$1.1 million.
- Transferring the state apprenticeship program from Department of Commerce to community college system.

[For a complete look at the appropriations bill, SB 257, click here.](#)

How the Deal Went Down

Senators in the GOP-led legislature held an initial vote Thursday evening. They returned at 12:05 a.m. Friday to take a final vote. That's because the chamber's rules require that the two required votes to pass the bill can't occur on the same day. Interestingly, before the first vote, Democrats didn't offer amendments to the budget.

When Senators returned to the floor after midnight, Democrats proposed a flurry of amendments that would add provisions from Gov. Roy Cooper's budget plan to the Senate budget. The amendments included bigger teacher pay raises and, as expected, each amendment was defeated in a 33-15, party-line vote. Republicans became miffed and called for a break until 2:30 a.m. Some senators took snoozes and some had a dance party in the halls of the Legislative Building. In a 34-15 party-line vote the bill's second reading, the Senate backed the GOP's state government spending blueprint through mid-2019. The legislation will next move to the House, where Republicans also are in charge. The two chambers want to pass a final budget before the fiscal year begins July 1.

Budget Highlights

Highlights of the \$22.9 billion budget for North Carolina state government for the 2017-18 fiscal year tentatively approved Thursday by the state Senate. Unless otherwise noted, monetary figures reflect increases or reductions to base budget expenses or the amount of revenue generated or lost. The two-year budget bill also covers the 2018-19 fiscal year, but those provisions can be altered by the General Assembly when it meets next year.

Some Legislation We're Watching

While NCACTE is monitoring dozens of bills, several of significance, which **as of today** have not seen much movement recently, include:

CTE Legislation, [House Bill 450](#): In a 110-0 vote, the N.C. House on April 4th approved and sent to the Senate a bill, the “Future Ready Student Act of 2017,” that would expand CTE, award competitive grants of up to \$5 million and broaden CTE to some lower grades. Primary sponsors are Reps. [Horn](#); [Johnson](#); [Dixon](#); [Williams](#).

NCACTE strongly supports the measure, which has been sitting in Senate Rules since April 10th. The bill – as noted in a [legislative summary](#) – also would establish business advisory councils as well as:

- Establish the CTE Expansion Program: Effective upon appropriation of funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Program would expand CTE by prioritizing the inclusion of students in 6th and 7th grade through grants administered by the NC Education and Workforce Innovation Commission.

-Funding: Used to award competitive grants in a total amount of **up to \$5 million** to be allocated as non-reverting funds to an LEA over seven years. Funds would be used only for employing additional licensed personnel in CTE areas, career development coordination areas, and support services to **expand CTE to 6th and 7th graders**, and maybe used for multiple schools in an LEA.

- Award of Grants: LEAs must include the in applications (1) a plan for expansion of the CTE program to 6th and 7th graders, including specific programs to be expanded, the significance of CTE in the LEA, and how the grade expansion would enhance the education program and the community; (2) a request for funds description of how the funds would be used, and other sources of funds available for the program and (3) a proposed 7-year budget with details on use of funds to add personnel, increase CTE efforts, and provide support services; (4) a meaningful strategy.

[HB 90](#): The bill is entitled “Eliminate NC Final Exam.” Currently, Middle Schools are required to take CTE final exams (NCFE). If this bill passes, they will no longer be required to take this state exam. Such a move would be good news for many CTE supporters because it would remove a thorn for most CTE Middle School, CTE Teachers and District CTE Administration. The House-approved bill, now in Senate Rules, would apply to the 2017-18 school year. Primary sponsors are [Elmore](#); [K. Hall](#); [Hurley](#).

[HB 751](#): The bill, which on April 26th cleared the House and now is in Senate Rules, is titled “Career and College Ready/High School Grads. It would require all students to demonstrate a certain level of reading achievement to accompany high school diplomas. Primary sponsors are Reps. [Blackwell](#); [Horn](#); [Johnson](#).

[SB 599](#): “Excellent Educators for Every Classroom,” which would establish the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission, would hold accountable the educator licensure process. Some concerns have been expressed about how a teacher could get a license if not affiliated with an educator preparation program.

The bill has a long way to go. It did not make crossover but could still be eligible for consideration. It was withdrawn from Senate Rules, re-referred to Senate Education/Higher Education and, if it receives a favorable vote there, would be re-referred to Senate Finance then Senate Rules. Primary sponsor is Sen. [Barefoot](#).

[SB 421](#): The bill, "Use of Career & Technical Funds/Onslow County," would appropriate \$5 million for Onslow County to retrofit and buy equipment for a regional CTE center. The bill's primary sponsor is Sen. Harry [Brown](#); R-Onslow, and Senate Majority Leader. Not surprisingly, the bill breezed through the Senate on April 11 and may soon get out of House committee.

[HB 600](#): "School Construction Flexibility" passed the House on April 26th and now sits in Senate Rules. Concerns remain on this bill concerning CTE funding. Primary sponsors are Reps. [J. Bell](#); [Lewis](#); [Brenden Jones](#); [Goodman](#).

[SB 169](#): "Teaching Excellence Bonus Expansion" cleared the Senate on March 23 and has been sitting in House Rules since. CTE funding here needs to be addressed. Primary sponsors are Sens. [Berger](#); [Harrington](#); [Wade](#).

Quote of the Week

"The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes."

- Frank Lloyd Wright, architect

Editor - Dave Simpson, NCACTE Lobbyist, P. O. Box 30998, Raleigh, N.C. 27609
Phone: (919) 781-3270, #5724; Email: dsimpson@carolinasagac.org