



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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House Budget Picture Coming into Focus

More Details Released Today: Republican House members today unveiled more provisions of their budget plan that would reduce tax bills for some and boost pension payments for state retirees. As of early this afternoon, because the full House budget bill had not been made public, details were still unknown about pay plans for state employees and teachers.

House budget writer Nelson Dollar, a Wake Republican, had scheduled an 11 a.m. news conference today but cancelled it, with the game plan from House leaders saying they hoped to vote on a budget by week's end. Some of the spending plan details were released last week that contrast with the Senate's budget plan, including:

Spending: Overall education spending is slightly less in the House budget, \$8.8 billion versus \$9 billion in the Senate proposal. But the House plan restores cuts to some education programs in eastern North Carolina that were part of a last-minute amendment in the Senate. Like the Senate, the House plans to spend \$22.9 billion in the coming fiscal year, which begins July 1st

Textbooks: The House proposal wants \$10.4 million more for textbooks and digital materials, marking a total next year of \$65.8 million, compared with the Senate's plan to add \$11.1 million.

State DPI hiring: The House bill adds \$921,000 for as many as 10 employees that State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson would hire. The proposal also calls for a new associate superintendent of early education who would report to Johnson. The budget includes \$250,000 to support an interagency council on early education. The Senate plans allocates five positions for Johnson.

School funding: The House budget would create a legislative task force to recommend a new method to fund public schools. The Senate budget bill omits such a task force.

Class size: The House plan requires a report on the limits on classroom space that would make it hard for schools to meet individual class-size requirements for K-3 grades without building expansions. This is not in the Senate budget.

State retirees: The finance provision released today include a 1.6 percent cost-of-living increase for state retirees for one year only, whereas the Senate budget contains no such increases.

[Click here for more details, beginning on line 48 of page 10.](#)

Vouchers: The House budget requires students using vouchers from the state to attend private schools to take the Iowa Test, a national achievement test. The Senate budget doesn't have this requirement.

House Budget Plans/Details, Other News

The Latest: Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, said he plans to have second and third readings during "normal hours, as opposed to any midnight thing" late this week. He said last week that the only consideration for a 12:01 a.m. vote on Friday of this week would be if Thursday's debate ran late. "Otherwise, assuming that we meet in the normal course of business, we would just come back on Friday morning," Moore said, according to the Insider.

Former Gov. Hunt Still Touting Public Schools Improvements: Now out of the job longer than the time he served as governor, four-term, former Gov. Jim Hunt said the Republican-controlled Legislature should do "big things" with additional dollars the state is taking in. The Democrat pointed to education projects he championed like Smart Start and moving teacher salaries to the national average – an objective of his last gubernatorial term.

"We've got the resources to do it," Hunt told The Associated Press at his office inside the library named for him at North Carolina State University. "This is an amazing time, the national economy's come back and we've benefited from it...but this can be a very special time if we grab it if we take advantage of what's out there for us."

Some Legislation We're Watching

While NCACTE is monitoring dozens of bills, several of significance 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

"Words cannot measure the depth of their devotion, the purity of their love or the totality of their courage."

- President Donald Trump, speaking about fallen troops at a Memorial Day ceremony on Monday at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

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