



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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What's Up

Budget Deal: Word in Raleigh early this afternoon was that House and Senate leaders, following a couple weeks of private negotiations, hope to have a final budget deal to unveil by this evening. Rep. Nelson Dollar, House senior Appropriations chair, said Friday the two sides were nearing a final deal and that they hoped to agree on all the major items by the end of the day.

As usual, the two chambers are likely to wind up somewhere between the House and the Senate positions on most items, with WRAL News reporting that major areas of contention that need to be resolved include:

- Teacher raises: Both House and Senate plans call for an average 9.5 percent hike over the two-year budget cycle. The Senate plan would come quicker, with an average increase of 3.7 percent in 2017-18, while the House's proposal was a 3.3 percent average raise the coming year. The House budget includes better raises for teachers at and above 16 years, while the Senate's plan does not.
- State employee raises: The House legislation offers an across-the-board raise of \$1,000 in 2017-18. The Senate bill recommends the higher of \$750 or 1.5 percent.
- State retiree pensions: The House plan includes a one-time bonus of 1.6 percent, but no annual cost-of-living increase. The Senate's budget includes neither an increase nor a bonus.
- Tax cuts, overall spending: The Senate plan includes major tax cuts while the House proposal is more modest, with a smaller increase in the standard deduction and no cuts to the corporate or individual income tax rates. Both House and Senate plans would spend the same amount, \$22.9 billion, a target that was settled on earlier. However, WRAL News reports that sources close to the negotiations say the final deal is likely to end up spending more – maybe as much as \$23.1 billion.

Senate Bill 599: The bill, “Excellent Educators for Every Classroom,” cleared the Senate last week and was moved on June 14th to House Education – K -12. Some concerns have been expressed to NCACTE about how a teacher could get a license if not affiliated with an educator

preparation program. The Senate-approved bill has eased some concerns in that the amended bill directs the State Board of Education to receive recommendations from the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission concerning educator preparation programs and minimum admissions requirements, including for CTE candidates, requiring a student in a program leading to licensure in CTE to have earned a minimum GPA of at least 2.7 and also have at least five years of relevant experience. [Click here to see the approved amendment.](#)

In passing the bill last week, it was argued that Senate wants to ease the teacher shortage at a time when schools across the state have a tough time finding teachers. Enrollment in college and university schools of education has dropped over the years.

The Senate bill would allow new teacher preparation programs that are not part of colleges and universities. The bill also changes the way adults switching careers get into teaching, replacing what's called a lateral entry license with a residency license. The State Board of Education would approve the non-traditional programs recommended by a new Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission.

The bill's critics said straying from traditional teacher education programs is bad. "This would allow anybody who wants to train a teacher to do so," said Sen. Gladys Robinson, a Guilford County Democrat. "That is not an acceptable standard to me." Sen. Erica Smith-Ingram, a former engineer who became a math and science teacher, said the bill would make it more difficult for people to switch careers to teach. Career switchers would need to obtain a residency license requiring teacher preparation courses to be completed in two years. Lateral entry teachers have three years to complete required courses.

Reminder: Your Voice Needs to Be Heard: With House-Senate budget conferees winding up their work, it's important that NCACTE members reach out to key Senators to encourage them to approve a House budget bill proposal that includes \$700,000 to promote CTE in the 6th and 7th grades. That provision is not in the Senate budget bill legislation.

This and That

Only 33 Bills Becoming Law: As of the end of Thursday, only 33 bills had become law since the legislature began work in Raleigh in January, according to the Asheville Citizen-Times. That's less than half the 80 bills approved as of the same date two years ago and less than a third of the average of 119 at this point of every "long" session of the General Assembly this century, the newspaper reports. Long sessions begin in January in odd-numbered years and run into summer. Short sessions start in April or May of even-numbered years and usually end in July.

Some Legislation We're Watching

NCACTE is monitoring dozens of bills, and **here is the latest, as of June 12th**, on some of those more important bills:

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 Education/Higher Education, 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](#).

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](#).

[HB 600](#): "School Construction Flexibility" passed the House on April 26th and now sits in Senate Education/Higher Education. 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

"We need to have a wholesale reform of how we do education preparation."

- Sen. Chad Barefoot, R-Wake, on a Senate bill allowing new teacher preparation programs that are not part of college and universities (The News & Observer, 6/12/17)

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