



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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About \$5 Million Approved for CTE Promotion

Great Budget News: The N.C. General Assembly approved last week, and sent to the Governor, a budget bill that includes \$4.2 million in grants for the coming year to expand CTE for the 6th and 7th grades as well as \$700,000 in FY 2018-19. The budget language says in part:

Sixth and Seventh Grade Career and Technical Education Grant Program Provides funds for the Sixth and Seventh Grade Career and Technical Education (CTE) Grade Expansion Grant Program, which will be administered by the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission. This program awards competitive grants to school districts over a seven-year grant period to expand CTE programs to sixth and seventh grade students. The revised net appropriation for this program is \$4.2 million in FY 2017-18 and \$700,000 in FY 2018-19

Passage of the CTE provision was a top goal of NCACTE and should go a long way to promoting and expanding CTE across the state. The House gave final approval to the Senate-passed bill on Thursday and sent it to Gov. Roy Cooper, who is expected to veto the measure. If the Democratic governor vetoes the bill, the Republican-led legislature is expected to easily override the veto.

Other Budget Details: The compromise state budget would give teachers an average pay raise of 3.3 percent in the coming year. It would raise most other state employees' pay by a flat \$1,000. Retired state employees would receive a 1 percent, permanent cost-of-living increase in their pension checks – a big change from the one-time increase in the House budget and the lack of an increase in the Senate budget.

Under the teacher pay plan, teachers with 17 to 24 years of experience would see some of the biggest raises. Starting teacher pay would remain at \$35,000, but teachers at most experience

levels would get a raise. That's similar to the original House plan, while the original Senate plan had allocated the biggest raises to teachers with nine to 14 years of experience.

Teachers with more than 25 years of experience would get an annual bonus of \$385, and new teachers with a high grade-point average or test scores would be eligible for a higher starting salary – if they teach in a low-performing school or teach special education, science, technology, math or engineering. Teacher pay raises would average 9.6 percent over two years, with the goal of having average salaries reach \$55,000 by 2020.

Public Education Details at a Glance: The budget includes, as reported by The Insider, such items as:

- Teach an additional 9,120 students anticipated in the public schools this fall: \$31.9 million.
- Classroom textbooks and digital materials: \$11.3 million.
- Reduce funding for central office administration in school districts by 7.4 percent: -\$7 million.
- Reimburse initial teacher licensure application fee for first-time applicants: \$245,000.
- Cut funding to Department of Public Instruction by 6.2 percent, with spending reductions determined by agency: -\$3.2 million.
- Expand tuition reimbursement program for teacher assistants seeking teaching degrees: \$315,000.
- Reduce funding to North Carolina Education Endowment Fund for startup to reinstate N.C. Teaching Fellows Program: -\$4.6 million.
- Expand NC Works Career Coaches, employed by community colleges to work with high school students: \$1.1 million.
- Transfer state apprenticeship program from Department of Commerce to community college system: \$850,000.

How the Vote Went Down: The budget bill breezed through the House Thursday following a 77-40 Wednesday to approve the final compromise budget, despite objections from Democrats that the spending plan includes millions in "pork" projects for mostly Republican districts.

Five Democrats joined Republicans in supporting what House Speaker Tim Moore called "a budget that every member of this House should be proud to vote for." The Senate also took a final 38-11 vote in favor of the budget Wednesday. "We're giving state employees a raise, we're taking care of our state retirees, we're funding critical services, and we're providing tax reliefs," Moore said.

Hope to See You Around!

For the past 14 years or so, it has been an honor and a pleasure working as your lobbyist for NCACTE. We've come a long way in that time, putting CTE in the forefront of the N.C. General

Assembly with our annual Legislative Policy Seminars and visits to the 170 legislators to show the big difference between overall high school graduation rates and CTE graduation rates.

This year, at our March 28th NCACTE Legislative Day, for example, we delivered excellent brochures showing that the overall graduation rate in 2016 was **85.8 percent** – compared with **97.7 percent for** students completing a 4-credit CTE Pathway. Last year, we kept the status of math for CTE in place despite serious challenges. Over the years, we have led efforts to put millions of dollars back into CTE coffers when legislative committees, the House or the Senate had other plans.

I have really enjoyed working with **Ruth Huff**, her predecessor **Tom Jones** and the many Legislative Committees over the years led by **Aaron Fleming, Chip Lucas, Todd Williams** and **Allison Dees**. You will be in good hands with your new lobbyist, **Brian Holloway**. I look forward to crossing paths with many of you in my job as President & CEO of Carolinas AGC, as one of our top priorities always will be improving CTE in both Carolinas. Happy trails!

Quote of the Week

"You're the Golden State Warriors of pork, almost undefeated."

– Rep. Darren Jackson, D-Wake, on GOP spending projects in the budget (The News & Observer, 6/21/17)

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