



Celebrating 175 years of free public education in North Carolina

2015-2016 Budget Highlights

Vouchers

- Increases school vouchers by \$6.8 million in 2015-16 and \$14 million in 2016-17, a total increase of 129% over the 2014-15 funding level. Total dollars available for 2015-16 is \$17.6 million and \$24.8 million for 2016-17.

Teacher Assistants

- Teacher Assistants are funded at the 2014-15 levels, but funds must be used for teacher assistants only. All flexibility for the funds are eliminated effective this school year. About 15,300 teacher assistant positions are funded, a decrease of about 7,000 fewer teacher assistants than in 2008.
- Teacher support will now be funded from general funds (not lottery funds) and non-instructional support personnel will be funded from lottery funds (no longer from general funds).

Teacher Pay

- Beginning teachers will be paid \$35,000 (an increase from \$33,000). NC continues to be below the national average in teacher pay and now ranks 42nd in the nation.
- All State employees/school personnel receive a one-time \$750 bonus (includes central office staff). The salary steps (tiers) are the same as 2014-15 and will be funded for teachers and principals/assistant principals.
- There is no change to master's and other advanced degree pay. Teachers who had a master's or other advanced degree or have completed one class prior to August 1, 2013 are grandfathered in under rules in place prior to that date. Master's and other advanced degree pay will always be allowed if the job requires it.
- The budget maintains the 12 percent pay differential for National Board Certified teachers.
- Provides a one-time \$809 bonus for principals/assistant principals at the top of the salary scale.
- No COLA increase for retirees.

Class Size

- Class size for first grade is reduced to 1:16 for 2016-17; additional \$27 million to hire teachers.

Classroom Resources

- Funding for textbooks and digital resources is increased by \$21.8 million in 2015-16 and another \$31 million next year. We are spending about half of the amount on textbooks than we did before the recession.
- Per pupil funding is about \$500 less than pre-recession levels; NC ranks 46th in the nation.
- Provides \$2 million this year for Wi-Fi networks to provide connectivity at the classroom level and another \$12 million next year.

Driver Education

- Funds driver education for 2015-2016 (general fund) and 2016-2017 (civil penalty and forfeiture fund). School districts can charge up to \$65 per student to fund driver's education. School districts must reduce the fee for students who prove economic hardship.
- A study committee is established to determine how to lower the cost of the program and seek alternate providers such as private companies and community colleges.

NC Department of Public Instruction

- Cuts NC Department of Public Instruction by 5.2 percent each year.
- NC DPI receives funds to carry out the Excellent Public Schools Act, a total of \$3.8 million in 2015-16 and \$8.5 million in 2016-17.
- Directs DPI to develop potential policy changes that improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

State Board of Education

- The State Board of Education cannot allow waivers to local boards of education to state laws and rules with the exception of class size and school calendar requirements needed to accommodate makeup days due to school closings.
- Gives the State Board of Education the authority to consolidate county school districts that share a border. City school districts are excluded from this new authority.
- The State Board of Community Colleges and State Board of Education are directed to develop remedial classes in math, reading, and English for high school seniors who do not meet certain college readiness criteria.
- The State Board of Education is directed to find an alternative funding formula for the NC Virtual Public Schools.
- The State Board of Education is asked to evaluate the feasibility of integrating competency-based assessments for use in local school administrative units and as part of a statewide testing system.

Pre-K

- A decrease of 5,400 slots since 2008; waiting list remains.

Teacher Evaluations

- LEAs must ensure that all teachers are given access to school-level value-added data and their own value-added data.

Low Performing Schools

- The State Board of Education must identify low performing **local school administrative units** on an annual basis. A low performing local school administrative unit is a unit in which the majority of the schools in that unit received a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth." If a local administrative unit has been identified as low-performing, they must:
 - Within 30 days of the identification of a local school administrative unit as low-performing by the State Board, the superintendent must submit to the local board of education a preliminary plan for improving both the school performance grade and school growth score of each low performing school in the unit, including how the superintendent and other central office administrators will work with each low performing school and monitor the low performing school's progress, and how current local school administrative unit

policy should be changed to improve student achievement throughout the local school administrative unit.

- Within 30 days of its receipt of the preliminary plan, the local board shall vote to approve, modify, or reject this plan. Before the local board votes on the plan, it shall make the plan available to the public, including the personnel assigned to each low performing school and the parents and guardians of the students who are assigned to each low performing school, and shall allow for written comments.
 - The local board shall submit a final plan to the State Board within five days of the local board's approval of the plan. The State Board shall review the plan expeditiously and, if appropriate, may offer recommendations to modify the plan. The local board shall consider any recommendations made by the State Board and, if necessary, amend the plan and vote on approval of any changes to final plan.
 - The local board of education shall provide access to the final plan on the local school administrative unit's Web site. The State Board of Education shall also provide access to each low performing local school administrative unit plan on the Department of Public Instruction's Web site.
 - Each local school administration unit identified as low performing shall provide written notification to the parent and guardians of students attending within 30 days of the identification.
- **State Board of Education must identify low-performing schools** annually. Schools that are given a school performance grade of D or F and have a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" are considered "low performing" schools. Once a school is identified as low-performing and the school is not located in a local school administrative unit identified as low-performing, they must do the following:
 - Within 30 days of the initial identification of a school as low-performing by the State Board, the superintendent shall submit to the local board of education a preliminary plan for improving both the school performance grade and school growth score, including how the superintendent and other central office administrators will work with the school and monitor the school's progress.
 - Within 30 days of its receipt of the preliminary plan, the local board shall vote to approve, modify, or reject this plan. Before the local board approves the preliminary plan, it shall make the plan available to the public personnel assigned to that school and the parents and guardians of the students assigned to the school to allow for their written comments.
 - The local board shall submit a final plan to the State Board within five days of the local board's approval of the plan. The State Board shall review the plan expeditiously and if appropriate, may offer recommendations to modify the plan. The local board shall consider any recommendations made by the State -Board and if necessary, amend the plan and vote on approval of any changes to the final plan.
 - The local board of education shall provide access to the final plan on the local school administrative unit's Web site. The State Board of Education shall also provide access to each low-performing school plan on the Department of Public Instruction's Web site.
 - Each school identified as low-performing shall provide written notification to the parent and guardians of students attending within 30 days of the identification.

Other

- Read to Achieve reading camps for 1st and 2nd graders in addition to the 3rd grade reading camps are allocated \$20 million. Allocation is same as the process used for the summer camp funding for 3rd graders.
- Local school boards must adopt a policy for implementing a reduction in force.
- Funds Cooperative Innovative High Schools in Pitt, Watauga and Wilson Counties and the Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience. Guilford and Wake County schools can access funds for college course work without additional operating funds.
- Creates a \$1 million competitive grant program for principal preparation programs within the State Education Assistance Authority.
- Funds the ADM for 2015-16 and puts projected 2016-17 ADM monies in reserve part of the budget.
- Provides \$1.5 million over two years to support and evaluate principal preparation programs.
- The education transportation budget is cut by 5 percent (\$25 million each year).
- Eliminates all funding for the Hunt Institute at UNC-C.
- Changes in the educational leave policy that will prevent anyone serving in professional organization like NCAE from participating in retirement systems for the time absent from school system effective July 1, 2015.
- Department of Public Safety and the Center for Safer Schools must construct and maintain a statewide School Risk and Response Management System that integrates existing data and applications that support risk planning, exercises, monitoring and emergency response via 911 dispatch.
- Changes the educator preparation program process requirement for admission into educator preparation programs by adding a minimum GPA. Creates formalized requirements for student clinical teaching experiences.