

# FY 2026-27 Recommended Legislative Priorities and Government Affairs Updates

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*February 4, 2026 [REVISED]*



# Key Legislative Dates

- February 10, 2026 – Meeting of the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee
- February 9-12, 2026 – Regular Session
- March 9-12, 2026 – Regular Session
- April 6-9, 2026 – Regular Session
- ***April 21, 2026 – Short Session convenes***



# Overall Priorities

| Request  | Governor's Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)                         | Senate Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)   | House Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)                        | Enacted  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Funding for school facility needs in Helene-impacted districts (\$100 million) |   | \$39,600,000 (NR)   |   | Total of \$64,300,000 (NR) across three programs<br><a href="#">(SL 2025-26)</a> |
| Increase teacher and educator pay to highest in the Southeast                  | 10.6% for teachers;<br>6% for principals;<br>3% for staff | 2.3% / 3.3% for teachers;<br>1.25% for principals and staff;<br>\$1,500 bonus | 8.7% for teachers;<br>2.5% for principals and staff | Salary step increases for FY 2025-26<br><a href="#">(SL 2025-89)</a>             |
| Restore master's pay   | \$10,000,000 (R)  |   | \$8,000,000 (R)                                     |  |
| Reform the principal pay plan  |   |   |   |  |
| Address the nearly \$13 billion in school construction needs                   | \$4 billion school construction bond proposal             | \$21,867,388 for NBPSCF;<br>\$20,000,000 for R&R                              | \$21,867,388 for NBPSCF;<br>\$20,000,000 for R&R    |  |
| Place a moratorium on Opportunity Scholarship program                          | Included  |   |   |  |



# Student and School Support

| Request  | DPI/SBE Request<br>(FY 2025-26)        | Governor's<br>Budget<br>(FY 2025-26) | Senate Budget<br>(FY 2025-26) | House Budget<br>(FY 2025-26) | Enacted  |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Increase in School Health Personnel Allotment  | \$65,490,706 (R)                       | \$32,745,000 (R)                     | \$13,917,965 (R)              |                              |  |
| Implement Exceptional Children Weighted Funding Formula  | \$89,400,000 (R)<br>\$109,200,000 (NR) | \$27,000,000 (R)                     |                               | \$10,600,000 (R)             |  |
| Student Transportation Information Management (TIMS)   | \$140,500 (R)                          | \$116,300 (R)                        |                               |                              |  |
| New Cooperative Innovative High Schools (Martin County Schools, Moore County Schools, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools) | \$635,000 (R)                          | \$635,000 (R)                        | \$1,110,000 (R)               |                              | \$1,110,000 (R) for five new CIHS ( <a href="#">SL 2025-92</a> ) |
| School Breakfast and Lunch at No Cost to Students  | \$377,000,000 (R)                      | \$85,300,000 (R)                     |                               |                              |  |
| Convert SRO Grants into an Appropriation Based on Formula for Elementary and Middle Schools                              | \$120,000,000 (R)                      | \$63,000,000 (R)                     |                               |                              |  |
| Charter School Review Board Operating, Travel Expenses, and Legal Counsel  | \$82,100 (R)                           | \$82,100 (R)                         | \$82,100 (R)                  |                              | <a href="#">SL 2025-80</a><br>directs DPI to use operating funds |



# Academic Support and Coaching

| Request  | DPI/SBE Request<br>(FY 2025-26)       | Governor's<br>Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)  | Senate Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)     | House Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)      | Enacted |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Support for Low Performing Districts                                       | \$4,500,000 (R)                       | \$4,500,000 (R)                       |                                   |                                   |         |
| Expand DIBELS Diagnostic to Grades 4-5                                     | \$1,390,800 (R)<br>\$966,508 (NR)     | \$1,390,800 (R)<br>\$967,000 (NR)     | \$1,390,800 (R)<br>\$966,508 (NR) | \$1,390,800 (R)<br>\$966,508 (NR) |         |
| Expand Literacy Professional Development and Support to Grades 6-8 (9 FTE) | \$14,000,000 (R)<br>\$25,002,000 (NR) | \$14,000,000 (R)<br>\$25,002,000 (NR) | \$110,000 (R)<br>\$1,560,000 (NR) | \$10,000,000 (R)                  |         |
| K-8 Math Screener  | \$44,000,000 (R)                      |                                       |                                   |                                   |         |
| High-Impact Tutoring Support for School Districts                          | \$23,200,000 (R)<br>\$875,000 (NR)    | \$6,000,000 (R)                       |                                   |                                   |         |
| Beginning Teacher Support Program Regional Convenings                      | \$500,000 (R)                         |                                       |                                   |                                   |         |
| Beginning Teacher Support Program Evaluation (FY27)                        | \$750,000 (NR)                        |                                       |                                   |                                   |         |
| Professional Misconduct Investigator (1 FTE)                               | \$120,000 (R)                         | \$120,000 (R)                         |                                   |                                   |         |
| Rulemaking Coordinator (1 FTE)   | \$120,630 (R)                         | \$120,630 (R)                         |                                   |                                   |         |



# Technology

| Request  | DPI/SBE Request<br>(FY 2025-26) | Governor's<br>Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)   | Senate Budget<br>(FY 2025-26) | House Budget<br>(FY 2025-26)                       | Enacted                            |
|--|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| One-to-One Device Refresh  | \$152,620,000 (R)               | \$100,000,000 (R)<br>\$11,300,000 (NR) |                               |  |                                    |
| Additional State Funds for Federal E-Rate Match                  | \$2,500,000 (R)                 | \$2,500,000 (R)                        |                               |  |                                    |
| School Cybersecurity Support                                     | \$6,910,000 (R)                 | \$6,910,000 (R)                        |                               |  |                                    |
| School Business Systems Modernization                            | \$45,000,000 (NR)               | \$15,000,000 (NR)                      | \$45,000,000 (NR)             | \$15,200,000 (NR)                                  |                                    |
| Uniform Education Reporting System (UERS)                        | \$17,500,000 (R)                | \$16,400,000 (R)<br>\$1,100,000 (NR)   | \$12,711,233<br>(R – 2026-27) | \$15,000,000 (NR)<br>\$12,711,233<br>(R – 2026-27) | \$9,400,000<br><u>(SL 2025-89)</u> |
| State Dept. of Information Technology (DIT) Billing Requirements | \$1,140,000 (R)                 | \$1,140,000 (R)                        | \$303,142 (R)                 |  |                                    |
| M365/Google Backup Server Requirements for State DIT Policy      | \$720,000 (R)                   | \$720,000 (R)                          |                               |  |                                    |



# Compensation Pathways

| Request  | DPI/SBE Request (FY 2025-26) | Governor's Budget (FY 2025-26) | Senate Budget (FY 2025-26) | House Budget (FY 2025-26) | Enacted |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) Salary Supplements | \$14,100,000 (R)             | \$14,100,000 (R)               | \$16,200,000 (R)           |                           |         |
| Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) Grants Expansion   | \$2,000,000 (R)              | \$2,000,000 (R)                | \$1,000,000 (R)            |                           |         |

\*[SL 2025-94](#) Provides State Board of Education with authority to grant waivers for K-3 class size requirements to ATR schools whose grant funding ended in 2024-25



# Non-Budget Legislative Requests

| Request   | House/Senate Bills   | Enacted |
|---|--|---------|
| School calendar flexibility   | HB121 and SB 754   |         |
| PSU dollar allotment reversions for use in purchasing technology                                    |  |         |
| Clarify Portfolio requirement for individuals seeking principal licensure                           | Senate and House budgets;<br>and HB 832  |         |
| DPI flexibility for placement of early literacy specialists   |  |         |
| Eliminate Praxis Core requirement for admission to EPP  |  |         |
| ADM hold harmless for Helene-impacted PSUs  |  |         |
| Eliminate DPI/SBE school and district accreditation   |  |         |
| Revise provisions for the CEP Meal Program Incentive program  | Senate and House budgets;<br>and HB 832  |         |
| Study how to eliminate or consolidate required DPI and State Board of Education legislative reports | Senate and House budgets;<br>and HB 832 eliminates or revises several required reports |         |
| Sunset the Textbook Commission  | Senate and House budgets   |         |



# FY 2026-27 Recommended Legislative Priorities

Recommended legislative priorities for FY 2026-27 are:

1. Based on the State Board and DPI's FY 2025-26 priorities;
2. Aligned with the State Board and DPI's joint strategic plan, *Achieving Educational Excellence*; and
3. Considers the General Assembly's priorities as outlined in the House and Senate versions of the budget



# FY 2026-27 Recommended Legislative Priorities

All legislative priorities are now organized into two categories:

1. Short Session Priorities
2. Ongoing Priorities



# FY 2026-27 Recommended Legislative Priorities

Overall priorities to strengthen our public schools:

- ***Invest in raising the pay for all public school employees (i.e., teachers, administrators and all other certified and non-certified staff), raising the pay for teachers so that North Carolina has the highest teacher salaries in the Southeast and restoring master's pay for all educators.***
- Reform the principal pay plan
- Help address the ~\$13 billion in school construction needs across the state
- Place a moratorium on expansion of the Opportunity Scholarship program and offer no new awards to students beginning in the 2026-27 fiscal year.
  - Redirect the funding appropriated for new Opportunity Scholarships for the 2026-27 fiscal year to addressing needs in our public schools.
  - Future funding increases for the Opportunity Scholarship program should be limited to the annual percentage increase in funding for the State Public School Fund.



# Average Teacher Salary in NC

2023-24 NC Average  
Teacher Salary National  
Ranking

**43<sup>rd</sup>**  
(\$58,292)

2024-25 NC Average  
Teacher Salary

**\$60,323**

*Average Teacher Salary, 2023-24*

| Rank | State          | Salary   |
|------|----------------|----------|
| 1    | Georgia        | \$67,641 |
| 2    | Virginia       | \$66,327 |
| 3    | Alabama        | \$61,912 |
| 4    | South Carolina | \$60,763 |
| 5    | Tennessee      | \$58,630 |
| 6    | Arkansas       | \$58,337 |
| 7    | Kentucky       | \$58,325 |
| 8    | North Carolina | \$58,292 |
| 9    | Louisiana      | \$55,911 |
| 10   | West Virginia  | \$55,516 |
| 11   | Florida        | \$54,875 |
| 12   | Mississippi    | \$53,704 |

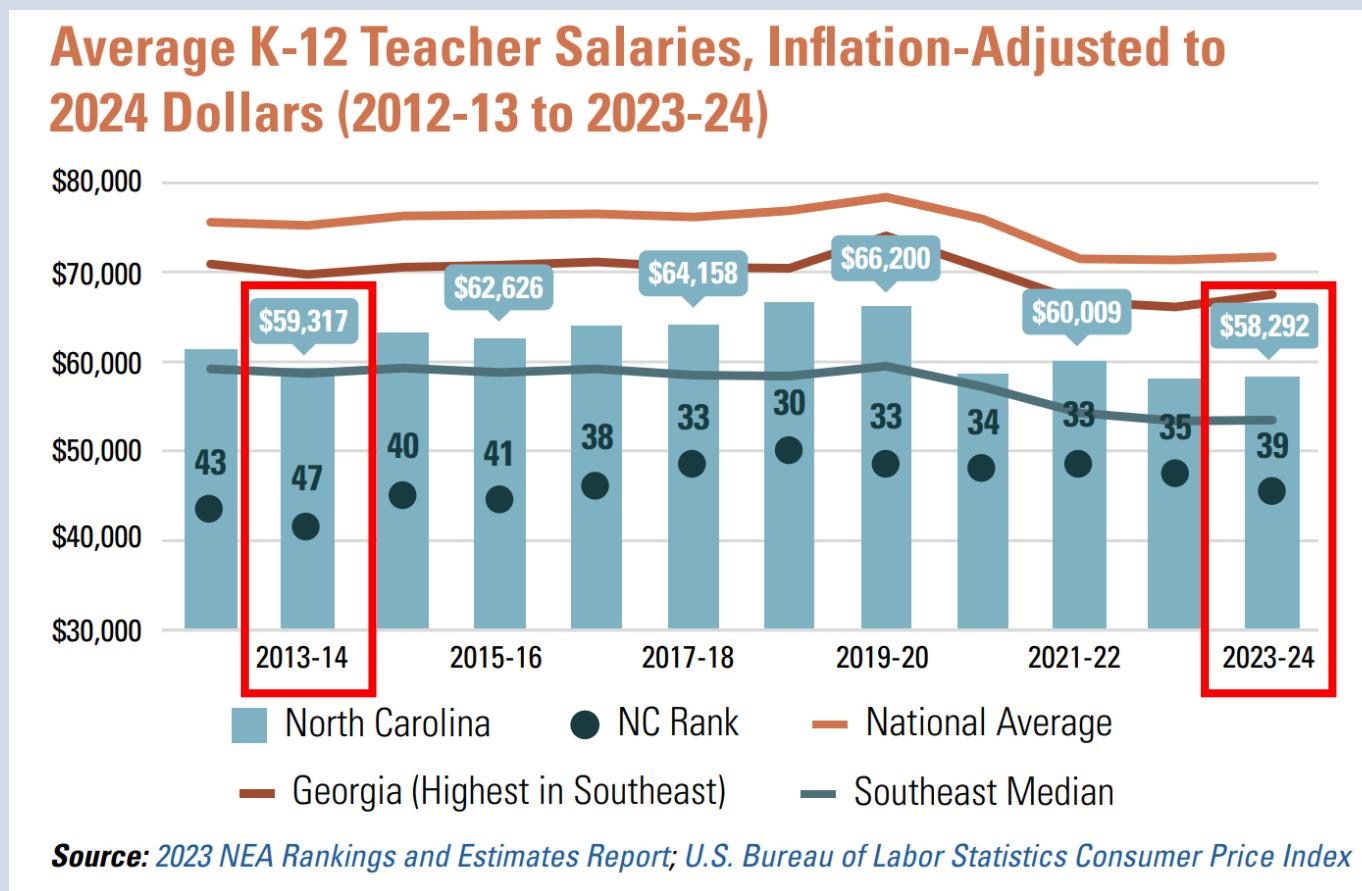
When adjusted for cost-of-living, NC ranks

❖ **10<sup>th</sup>** in average teacher salary for 2023-24 in southeast

Sources: National Education Association, *Rankings of States 2024 and Estimate of School Statistics 2025*; NCDPI, *Highlights of the North Carolina Public School Budget March 2025*; BEST NC, *Teacher Pay in North Carolina 2025*



# Inflation-Adjusted Average Teacher Salaries



From: BEST NC, Facts and Figures: Education in North Carolina, June 2025



# Short Session Priorities

| Request  | Recurring/<br>Nonrecurring | Budget<br>Estimate              |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Expand DIBELS Diagnostic to Grades 4-5                                     | R<br>NR                    | \$1,427,000<br>\$966,508        |
| Expand Literacy Professional Development and Support to Grades 6-8 (9 FTE) | R<br>NR                    | \$14,000,000<br>\$25,002,000    |
| Implement Exceptional Children Weighted Funding Formula                    | R<br>NR                    | \$89,400,000*<br>\$109,200,000* |
| Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) Salary Supplements                           | R                          | \$26,571,000*                   |
| Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) Grants Expansion                             | R                          | \$2,000,000                     |
| Increase in School Health Personnel Allotment                              | R                          | \$64,269,353                    |



# Short Session Priorities

| Request  | Recurring/<br>Nonrecurring | Budget<br>Estimate |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Additional State Funds for Federal E-Rate Match          | R                          | \$2,500,000        |
| Beginning Teacher Support Program                        | R                          | \$500,000          |
|  | NR                         | \$750,000          |
| Revised Limited English Proficient (LEP) Funding Formula | NR                         | \$200,000          |
| Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund (NBPSCF)          | R                          | \$117,000,000      |
| Public School Repair and Renovation Fund (PSBRRF)        | R                          | \$25,000,000       |



# Ongoing Priorities

| Request   | Recurring/<br>Nonrecurring | Budget<br>Estimate        |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student Transportation Information Management (TIMS)  | R                          | \$140,500                 |
| School Breakfast and Lunch at No Cost to Students   | R                          | \$377,000,000             |
| Convert SRO Grants into an Appropriation Based on Formula for Elementary and Middle Schools | R                          | \$120,000,000             |
| Support for Low Performing Districts  | R                          | \$4,500,000               |
| K-8 Math Screener   | R                          | \$44,000,000              |
| High-impact tutoring support for school districts   | R<br>NR                    | \$23,200,000<br>\$875,000 |
| Professional Misconduct Investigator and Rulemaking Coordinator (2 FTE)                     | R                          | \$240,630                 |



# Ongoing Priorities

| Request  | Recurring/<br>Nonrecurring | Budget Estimate |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| One-to-One Device Refresh for all K-12 students (over 4 years)           | R                          | \$150,678,300   |
| School Cybersecurity Support   | R                          | \$3,350,000     |
| School Business Systems Modernization                                    | NR                         | \$45,000,000    |
| Single Sign-On Upgrades for Infinite Campus and other Shared IT Services | R                          | \$8,100,000     |
| State Dept. of Information Technology (DIT) Billing Requirements         | R                          | \$1,140,000     |
| M365/Google Backup Server Requirements for State DIT Policy              | R                          | \$520,000       |



# Discussion

1. What feedback do you have on these proposed legislative priorities?
2. Which one-to-one device refresh option (K-12, 3-12, or 6-12) should be included in the Board's and DPI's legislative priorities for FY 2026-27?



# Non-Budget Legislative Requests

- School calendar flexibility
- Eliminate Praxis Core requirement for admission to EPP
- Revise portfolio requirement for individuals seeking principal licensure
- Revise provisions for the CEP Meal Program Incentive program
- Study how to eliminate or consolidate required DPI and State Board of Education legislative reports
- PSU dollar allotment reversions for use in purchasing technology
- DPI flexibility for placement of early literacy specialists
- Eliminate DPI/SBE school and district accreditation
- Sunset the Textbook Commission



# Non-Budget Legislative Requests

- Auto enrollment in advanced-level courses for students in English Language Arts
- Revise the Limited English Proficient (LEP) funding formula
- Increase threshold for procurement from \$90,000 to federal threshold of \$350,000 to allow child nutrition programs to more easily procure local agricultural products
- Remove requirement for beginning teachers to attempt licensure exam in the first year of licensure
- Establish consistent date for carryforward of various allotments



# Non-Budget Legislative Requests

- Fund statewide virtual charter schools at the statewide average per pupil expenditure and not per pupil expenditure for where the office is located
- Allow for transfer of funds for any EC student who transfers from one PSU to another in the first 60 days of the year
- Increase share of administrative funds retained by DPI from the Public School Building Capital Fund (PSBCF) from 2.0% to 2.5%
- Expand the definition of a qualifying school for the Principal Recruitment Supplement to include all low-performing schools



# Questions and Discussion





**NORTH CAROLINA**  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction