

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

*Geoff Coltrane, Senior Director of Government Affairs and Strategy  
Office of Government Affairs*

*February 4, 2026*



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

# 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 (FY 2025-26)	Senate Budget (FY 2025-26)	House Budget (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 ( <a href="#">SL 2025-26</a> )
Increase teacher and educator pay to highest in the Southeast	10.6% for teachers; 6% for principals; 3% for staff	2.3%/ 3.3% for teachers; 1.25% for principals and staff; \$1,500 bonus	8.7% for teachers; 2.5% for principals and staff	Salary step increases for FY 2025-26 ( <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; \$20,000,000 for R&R	\$21,867,388 for NBPSCF; \$20,000,000 for R&R	
Place a moratorium on Opportunity Scholarship program	Included			



# Student and School Support

Request	DPI/SBE Request (FY 2025-26)	Governor's Budget (FY 2025-26)	Senate Budget (FY 2025-26)	House Budget (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) \$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> directs DPI to use operating funds



# Academic Support and Coaching

Request	DPI/SBE Request (FY 2025-26)	Governor's Budget (FY 2025-26)	Senate Budget (FY 2025-26)	House Budget (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) \$966,508 (NR)	\$1,390,800 (R) \$967,000 (NR)	\$1,390,800 (R) \$966,508 (NR)	\$1,390,800 (R) \$966,508 (NR)	
Expand Literacy Professional Development and Support to Grades 6-8 (9 FTE)	\$14,000,000 (R) \$25,002,000 (NR)	\$14,000,000 (R) \$25,002,000 (NR)	\$110,000 (R) \$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) \$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 (FY 2025-26)	Governor's Budget (FY 2025-26)	Senate Budget (FY 2025-26)	House Budget (FY 2025-26)	Enacted
One-to-One Device Refresh	\$152,620,000 (R)	\$100,000,000 (R) \$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) \$1,100,000 (NR)	\$12,711,233 (R – 2026-27)	\$15,000,000 (NR) \$12,711,233 (R – 2026-27)	\$9,400,000 ( <a href="#">SL 2025-89</a> )
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; 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; and HB 832	
Study how to eliminate or consolidate required DPI and State Board of Education legislative reports	Senate and House budgets; 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 teacher and educator pay so that North Carolina has the highest teacher salaries in the Southeast; restore 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

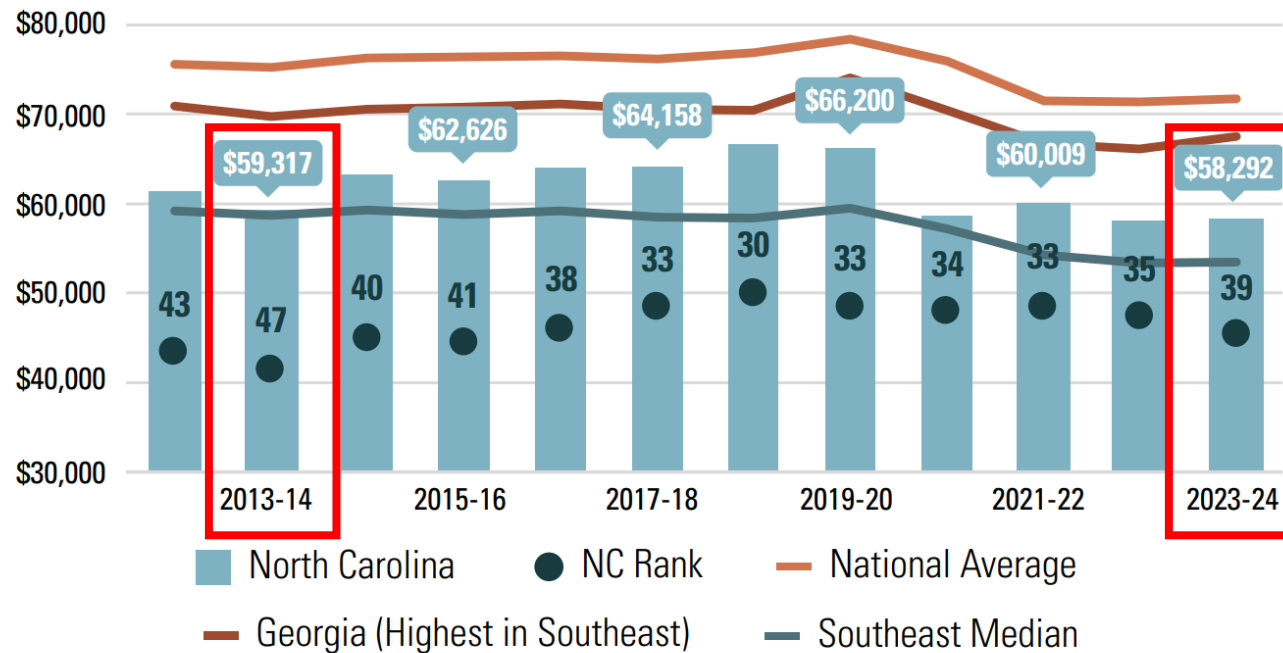
❖ **10<sup>th</sup>** in average teacher salary for 2023-24 in southeast

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

**Average K-12 Teacher Salaries, Inflation-Adjusted to 2024 Dollars (2012-13 to 2023-24)**



**Source:** 2023 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

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

# Short Session Priorities

Request	Recurring/ Nonrecurring	Budget Estimate
Expand DIBELS Diagnostic to Grades 4-5	R NR	\$1,427,000 \$966,508
Expand Literacy Professional Development and Support to Grades 6-8 (9 FTE)	R NR	\$14,000,000 \$25,002,000
Implement Exceptional Children Weighted Funding Formula	R NR	\$89,400,000* \$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/ Nonrecurring	Budget Estimate
Additional State Funds for Federal E-Rate Match	R	\$2,500,000
Beginning Teacher Support Program	R NR	\$500,000 \$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/ Nonrecurring	Budget 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 NR	\$23,200,000 \$875,000
Professional Misconduct Investigator and Rulemaking Coordinator (2 FTE)	R	\$240,630



# Ongoing Priorities

Request	Recurring/ Nonrecurring	Budget Estimate
One-to-One Device Refresh (3 options for consideration): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-12 device refresh over 4 years</li> <li>• 3-12 device refresh over 4 years</li> <li>• 6-12 device refresh over 4 years</li> </ul>	R R R	\$150,678,300 \$117,525,100 \$82,794,700
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