

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION LOCAL BOARD RESOLUTION URGING BUDGET PASSAGE

Highlighting the Challenges School Districts Have Faced Navigating Fiscal Year 2026

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute § 143C-4-1 states the General Assembly shall create a budget for two fiscal years beginning on July 1 of each odd-numbered year; and

WHEREAS, it is nine months into Fiscal Year 2026 and a Current Operations Appropriations Act has not yet been enacted by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Orange County School District receives approximately fifty-one percent of its funding from State appropriations and builds its budgets according to those appropriations; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 Short Session convenes on April 21, less than one month before local boards must submit their budgets to county commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Orange County School and Chapel Hill Carrboro City School District's County Government have had to plan the Fiscal Year 2027 budget without knowledge of State appropriations for the current fiscal year, let alone the next one; and

WHEREAS, the amount of State appropriations impacts the allocation of Federal and Local funds as well as the requests made of Local governments within the budget process for expenditures, including teacher supplements; and

WHEREAS, despite the provision in North Carolina General Statute § 143C-5-4(b) for budget continuation of recurring funds at the level of the previous fiscal year, the failure to pass a biennial budget has forced the Orange County Schools District to operate with significant budget uncertainty well into the current fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Orange County School Board has been forced to adopt a final budget resolution, which delays planned expenditures, including teacher supplements, restricts hiring, and prevents our district from committing funds for capital projects and other operational needs; and

WHEREAS, despite provisions for step increases, without passage of an appropriations act, salaries of approximately 408 employees in the Orange County School District are frozen at 2024-2025 levels; and

WHEREAS, the lack of a budget and frozen pay scales, coupled with a rise in premiums for district employees participating in the North Carolina State Health Plan, has resulted in a net pay decrease for teachers and school employees in the Orange County School District; and

WHEREAS, Orange County Schools strives to meet nationally recommended staffing ratios for school health personnel, requiring sufficient state appropriations to do so; and

WHEREAS, the enrollment of exceptional children in Orange County Schools is sixteen (16) percent, but state funding is capped at 13 percent, requiring the district to allocate approximately \$2.4 million in local funds annually to cover the gap; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Orange County School Board of Education does hereby request that the North Carolina General Assembly immediately pass a 2026 Appropriations Act that:

- Mirrors the House proposal for all school employee salaries in the second year of their proposed budget (SB 257, Version 6), includes step increases at every level, and provides education-based salary supplements;
- Increases the Public School Repair & Renovation fund from \$50 million to \$70 million as proposed in both the 2025 Senate and House budget plans;
- Allocates \$27.9 million in recurring funds for 320 additional school health personnel positions;
- Implements a weighted funding model for Exceptional Children funding (approximately \$92.6 million (R) & \$27.2 (NR) per DPI, or in its absence, a minimum increase of the cap to - 16% of allotted ADM).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

The School Board Chair and Superintendent of Orange County Schools are authorized to disseminate this Resolution to members of the North Carolina General Assembly and the Governor; and

The Board encourages parents, students, and other community members to contact their North Carolina legislators, requesting that the General Assembly pass a State budget that includes the items listed above.

Adopted this 20th day of April, 2026

Mr. Will Atherton, Chair
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Ms. Wendy Padilla, Vice Chair
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mrs. Carrie Doyle, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Ms. Bonnie Hauser, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mrs. Anne Purcell, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mr. André Richmond, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mrs. Sarah Smylie, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Cc:
Dr. Danielle Jones
Superintendent
Orange County School