

**Wake County Public School System
 Superintendent’s Proposed Budget 2026-27
 Board of Education Q&A
 April 21, 2026**

1. How much potential savings would there be if we limited high schools to no more than 5 Assistant Principals?

The 2026-27 high school assistant principal formula is:

| High Schools | All |
|--------------------|-----|
| Number of Students | MOE |
| 1 - 1,599 | 47 |
| 1,600 - 2,099 | 58 |
| 2,100 - 2,599 | 69 |
| 2,600+ | 80 |

If WCPSS revised the formula to remove the third and fourth tiers, the maximum number of assistant principal Months of Employment (MOE) allotted for a school would be 58 MOE. There would be a budget reduction of 132 MOE at \$1.2 million. Ten high schools would earn 11 fewer months for assistant principals, and one high school would earn 22 fewer months for assistant principals.

2. In addition to the potential savings, could we provide a comparison in the number of APs to other large high schools in the state?

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

High Schools: Assistant principals are allotted at 11 months

- 1 AP per 600 students
- Average for high schools is 3 APs
- Largest high school has 5 APs

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

Traditional High Schools (Tier 1 & Tier 2):

- Enrollment > 1,695: 4 FTE APs
- Enrollment > 800: 3 FTE APs
- Enrollment > 500: 2 FTE APs

Tier 3 High Schools:

- Enrollment > 1,400: 4 FTE APs
- Enrollment > 600: 3 FTE APs

Durham Public Schools

High Schools: Assistant principals are allotted at 11 months

- 2 if > 900 and <1,101
- 3 if >1,100 and < 1,650
- 4 if >1,649 and < 1,901
- 5 if > 1,900

3. What is the cost saving for realigning the Assistant Principal ratio for each school? What is the minimum number of APs that we can have for each school?

The NC Department of Public Instruction provides months of employment for assistant principals based on 1 month per 98.53 average daily membership (rounded to the nearest month). Based on the state’s formula, a school would need to have 1,182 students to earn a full-time 12-month assistant principal. A school would need 985 students to earn a 10-month assistant principal.

WCPSS currently uses the following formula for assistant principal allotments:

| Elementary Schools | Traditional Modified YR operating on TR 4 | YR |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Number of Students | MOE | MOE |
| 1 - 849 | 11 | 12 |
| 850+ | 22 | 23 |

| Middle Schools | Traditional Modified YR operating on TR 4 | YR |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Number of Students | MOE | MOE |
| 1+ | 33 | 36 |

| High Schools | All |
|--------------------|-----|
| Number of Students | MOE |
| 1 - 1,599 | 47 |
| 1,600 - 2,099 | 58 |
| 2,100 - 2,599 | 69 |
| 2,600+ | 80 |

New High Schools – as grades are added when the school opens, they will earn assistant principal months by grade until they have students in all four grade levels (12 MOE + 12 MOE + 12 MOE + 11 MOE) to earn the minimum allotment of 47 months.

School/Virtual School:
 • Crossroads Flex: 12 MOE

In 2025-26, the state formula provided 1,637 months of employment.

WCPSS allotted a total of 4,415.00 MOE for assistant principals. Schools converted resources to add 503.27 MOE for assistant principal. Area superintendents allotted 95.31 months of employment from targeted assistance for assistant principals. The 2025-26 total assistant principal months is 5,013.58.

One of the options the superintendent will provide to board members for consideration as a budget reduction for 2026-27 as part of the \$10 million in changes needed to offset the removal of a special education reduction is to remove the top two tiers of the high school assistant principal formula. This adjustment would impact 11 schools. There would be a total reduction of 132.0 months of employment at a savings of \$1.2 million.

The top tier for larger schools would become 58 MOE. Ten schools would decrease by 11 MOE AP (Apex Friendship, Athens Drive, Broughton, Green Hope, Green Level, Leesville Road, Millbrook, Panther Creek, Rolesville, and Willow Spring high schools. One school would decrease by 22 MOE AP (Enloe High School).

According to WCPSS's current assistant principal formulas, the minimum number of assistant principal months at a school is 11 months of employment or one assistant principal.

- 4. How many of our staff receive Master's Pay? What is the total cost to support Master's Pay each year? Do all new hires immediately receive Master's Pay? The \$2.355 million mentioned in page 61 is to pay for new hires. What would the potential cost savings be to require 3 years of employment before starting Master's Pay? Please include the cost of employer match for health insurance and retirement that go along with the increase in pay.**

1,719 teachers currently receive local Master's pay. The total cost is just over \$15 million per year. The approximate cost savings would be \$2.355 million dollars per year.

- 5. What would happen if we were to move out of the Crossroads buildings? Or if we were to utilize only Crossroads III? I know that we still have over 96 months in our lease. What is the immediate cost saving to end, or reduce, the use of the Crossroads facilities, and what is the cost of breaking our lease? What would be the potential cost to move into other existing space owned by WCPSS? Can we utilize the Crossroads FLEX space as space for central staff? What about the space on Capital Blvd? If staff is required to work half the time from home, we can have people share office space and save on the expense. I know that the space at Piney Plains is not easily renovated to be used. Can the space on Capital Blvd be quickly transformed to be used by central office staff?**

A move from Crossroads to other facilities would have a number of problems. Similar to the Crossroads/Flex building adjacent to CR 1, we would either incur penalties or have to find a suitable tenant to sublease the Crossroads complex. Please keep in mind that Wake County is interested in subleasing the Crossroads/Flex building. We do not have a cost estimate at this time and would need to know who would be moving and to what site. Capital Blvd is not an option as there is no suitable office space at the site and it could take up to 2 years (including design, plan approvals and construction) before occupancy. Piney Plains is currently zoned for office occupancy, but selection of an architect, design, plan approvals and construction would take a minimum of 2 years.

The current lease cost for Crossroads I and II is \$4.1 million and Crossroads III is \$2.2 million for an annual cost of \$6.3 million. This figure includes the annual Common Area Maintenance (CAM) charges. It's also important to note that the utilities, maintenance and capital improvements are included in the leases, which allows M&O to focus primarily on our schools.

- 6. We have areas of Wake County that are growing and require building more schools to keep up with the growth. At the same time, we have other areas where we are facing decreasing enrollment, and having to consider calendar change from MTYR. Hypothetically, what is the cost of operating 2 single track elementary schools that are not full, versus the cost of operating one MTYR Elementary school that is full? I imagine that we can reduce MOE and operating expenses by consolidating our under-enrolled schools. The vacated building can potentially be used for central office functions (with additional savings from not having to lease space for the central office).**

First, I want to clarify that a MTYR school does not double its capacity. Instead, a school can gain 25-33 percent more seats dependent on the core building design. Therefore a 2-to-1 approach is unlikely in our district as very few of our schools are so underenrolled that they could easily be merged onto a single campus, and any that have such low enrollment are not co-located in the same region/ area OR are strategically in high-growth areas where the available seats are needed to manage near term enrollment growth. The reality is that a 3-to-2 or 4-to-3 model is a more mathematically sound approach in areas of the district that are stabilizing with respect to enrollment and are no longer projected to experience rapid periods of growth.

Second, for this exercise we focused solely on personnel costs. There will be other associated cost implications in areas like maintenance and operations, transportation and routing, child nutrition services, special programs, Title I status, capital expenses associated with upfitting the empty campus to meet administrative purposes, enrollment rate changes if parents are unhappy with the merging, furniture and other per student expenses that will be shifted to the newly merged site, additional steps for positions like lead secretary and data manager, and the like. Therefore, the estimates below do not present a full picture of the costs and/or savings associated with this approach.

Finally, for this exercise we identified two elementary schools (A and B) that might be able to fit on a single campus if A were to merge with B and B were to become a MTYR elementary school. Based on this rough analysis, the reduction of positions like principal, assistant principal, lead secretary, etc. from school A and the addition to school B of enough months of employment to support the larger student body results in an estimated savings of \$800,000.

We also identified two middle schools (C and D) that might be able to fit on a single campus if C were to merge with D and D were to become a MTYR middle school. Based on this rough analysis, the reduction of positions from school C combined with the addition to school D to support the larger student population results in an estimated savings of \$1,000,000.