



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

July 11, 2014

Tough budget negotiations continued this week, with education and Medicaid spending at the center of the debate. After a series of Budget Conferees' meetings in public on Tuesday and Wednesday and much jockeying between House and Senate positions, the House increased its overall *average* teacher pay raise position from 5 to 6 percent, while the Senate remained at an *average* 11 percent pay raise. On Thursday afternoon, Governor McCrory released a statement agreeing with the House's move to 6 percent and pledging to "veto the latest Senate plan or any plan that resembles it because I know of no financial way we can go beyond the House proposal without eliminating thousands of teacher assistants, cutting Medicaid recipients and putting at risk future core state services." For the Governor's full statement, please see:

<http://www.governor.state.nc.us/newsroom/press-releases/20140710/governor-mccrory-pledges-veto-senate-budget>.

Subsequently, in a news interview on Thursday, President Pro Tempore of the Senate Phil Berger reiterated the Senate's position on its proposed 11 percent teacher pay raise:

<http://www.wral.com/news/state/nccapitol/video/13803446/>.

Just the morning before, on Wednesday, the following school administrators and educators presented to the Budget Conference Committee on the value of teacher assistants and how such employees should not be laid off (or positions otherwise eliminated) in order to pay for higher teacher salaries:

1. Dr. Heath Morrison, Superintendent of Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools
2. Dr. Frank Till, Superintendent of Cumberland County Schools
3. Dr. Sue Burgess, Superintendent of Dare County Schools
4. Sherry Schliesser, Elementary School Principal
5. Becky Bishop, Third Grade Teacher, National Board Certified

Despite the absence of an agreement on any teacher pay raise, the House and Senate did make some concessions on two issues that had been major stumbling blocks in the K-12 public education budget until this week. First, the Senate indicated on Tuesday afternoon that it was willing to change its position on teacher pay and no longer require teachers to surrender career status in exchange for higher pay. House leaders warmly received that offer. Second, the House indicated on Wednesday that it would take the controversial \$29.5 million in projected additional lottery proceeds "off the table," conceding (for now) that the House was willing to forego increasing lottery advertising to 2%. Senate leaders appreciated that offer. Thus, going into next week's round of budget negotiations, some remaining key education differences are as follows:

Issues	House	Senate
Teacher Salary Increase	6% <i>average</i> raise	11% <i>average</i> raise
Teacher Assistants	No reduction	\$233 million reduction
DPI	1% cut	30% cut

For more information, see the following links:

- [“Conference SB 744” spreadsheet \(as of July 9, 2014\)](#)
- [Senate “Comparison of Teacher Pay Plans”](#)
- [House “FY 14-15 Teacher Assistants Funding”](#)
- [SB 744 Appropriations Act of 2014](#)

Other Action on Education Bills this Week

[SB 812](#) Replace Common Core State Standards with North Carolina’s Higher Academic Standards

The conferees adopted their report on Tuesday, July 8, and the Senate approved it on Thursday, July 10. The [Conference report](#) constitutes the conferees’ agreement on this legislation which had significantly differed in its prior House and Senate versions. This report will now go to the House for a vote, and if it passes, then on to the Governor’s office for review and presumably signature. This legislation is, therefore, not yet law.

The Conference report largely reflects the bill supported by the Senate. The bill is to be entitled, “An Act to Exercise North Carolina’s Constitutional Authority Over All Academic Standards; to Replace Common Core; and to Ensure that Standards are Robust and Appropriate and Enable Students to Succeed Academically and Professionally.” Among other things, the report provides that, “[t]he current Standard Course of Study remains in effect until official notice is provided to all public school teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians of students enrolled in the public schools of any changes made in the Standard Course of Study by the State Board of Education.” In addition, the State Board of Education (SBE) would maintain its authority under the North Carolina Constitution to adopt academic standards for public schools.

As in all prior versions of the legislation, it would establish a new Academic Standards Review Commission, with its first meeting by September 1, 2014. The Commission would terminate December 31, 2015, or upon the filing of its final report to the General Assembly. The Commission’s 11 appointees would consist of:

- 4 Members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;
- 4 Members appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 2 Members of SBE: (1) the Chair or the Chair’s designee, and (2) another member, as appointed by the Chair, representing the State Board’s Task Force on Summative Assessment;
- 1 Member appointed by the Governor.
- (No appointees can be serving in a statewide elected office or as a member of the General Assembly.)

The Commission would be required to conduct a comprehensive review of all English Language Arts and Mathematics standards to ensure that those standards, and any proposed modifications, meet the following criteria:

1. Increase students’ level of academic achievement.
2. Meet and reflect North Carolina’s priorities.
3. Are age-level and developmentally appropriate.
4. Are understandable to parents and teachers.
5. Are among the highest standards in the nation.

The Commission would be required to recommend any changes to the standards to SBE.

Relevant Meetings: July 14– July 17

Monday, July 14

4:30 PM Conference Committee on SB 744 – Appropriations Act of 2014 (544 LOB)
(House)

Each morning of Session (tentatively)

9:00 AM Rules and Operations of the Senate

Finally, as the Budget Conferees continue their work on attempting to finalize a budget this summer, please contact them directly and as soon as possible if you have thoughts or concerns about public education funding issues or otherwise:

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/confcomm/confcommittee.pl?BillChamber=S&BillID=744&session=2013>

Contact Information:

Rachel E. Beaulieu

Department of Public Instruction
Legislative & Community Relations Director
919-807-4035

Rachel.Beaulieu@dpi.nc.gov

Zane B. Stilwell, II

State Board of Education
Legislative Relations & Policy
919-807-4068

Zane.Stilwell@dpi.nc.gov

Loretta Peace-Bunch

Legislative Assistant
919-807-3403

Loretta.Peace-Bunch@dpi.nc.gov

Gretchen Cleevly

State Board of Education
Summer Law Clerk
919-807-3648