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GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
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SENATE BILL DRS45477-MTa-183

Short Title:	Pay Teachers What They're Worth Act.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Senator Bradley (Primary Sponsor).	
Referred to:		

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCREASE EDUCATOR SALARIES, TO REINSTATE EDUCATION-BASED SALARY SUPPLEMENTS FOR EDUCATORS, TO ESTABLISH THE PAID STUDENT TEACHING GRANT PROGRAM, AND TO REQUIRE THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY TO STUDY IMPROVING EDUCATOR COMPENSATION.

Whereas, North Carolina continues to experience teacher shortages in multiple subject areas and geographic regions; and

Whereas, student teaching is a full-time professional requirement that often prevents teacher candidates from maintaining outside employment; and

Whereas, financial barriers during clinical preparation discourage many prospective educators from entering the profession; and

Whereas, competitive salaries and stronger teacher preparation pipelines are essential to ensuring that North Carolina students have access to qualified teachers; and

Whereas, the purpose of the following enactment is to strengthen recruitment and retention of educators by improving compensation and supporting teacher candidates entering the profession; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. RAISE SALARIES FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

SECTION 1.(a) The following monthly teacher salary schedule shall apply for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to licensed personnel of the public schools who are classified as teachers. The salary schedule is based on years of teaching experience.

2026-2027 Teacher Monthly Salary Schedule

Years of Experience	"A" Teachers
0	$5,000
1	$5,091
2	$5,183
3	$5,274
4	$5,366
5	$5,457
6	$5,576
7	$5,687
8	$5,796
9	$5,907
10	$6,018

11	$6,128
12	$6,239
13	$6,349
14	$6,460
15-24	$6,571
25+	$6,823

SECTION 1.(b) Salary Supplements for Teachers Paid on This Salary Schedule. –

(1) Licensed teachers who have NBPTS certification shall receive a salary supplement each month of twelve percent (12%) of their monthly salary on the "A" salary schedule.

(2) Licensed teachers who are classified as "M" teachers shall receive a salary supplement each month of ten percent (10%) of their monthly salary on the "A" salary schedule.

(3) Licensed teachers with licensure based on academic preparation at the six-year degree level shall receive a salary supplement of one hundred twenty-six dollars ($126.00) per month in addition to the supplement provided to them as "M" teachers.

(4) Licensed teachers with licensure based on academic preparation at the doctoral degree level shall receive a salary supplement of two hundred fifty-three dollars ($253.00) per month in addition to the supplement provided to them as "M" teachers.

(5) Certified school nurses shall receive a salary supplement each month of ten percent (10%) of their monthly salary on the "A" salary schedule.

(6) School counselors who are licensed as counselors at the master's degree level or higher shall receive a salary supplement each month of one hundred dollars ($100.00).

SECTION 1.(c) For school psychologists, school speech pathologists who are licensed as speech pathologists at the master's degree level or higher, and school audiologists who are licensed as audiologists at the master's degree level or higher, the following shall apply:

(1) The first step of the salary schedule shall be equivalent to the sixth step of the "A" salary schedule.

(2) These employees shall receive the following salary supplements each month:

a. Ten percent (10%) of their monthly salary, excluding the supplement provided pursuant to sub-subdivision b. of this subdivision.

b. Three hundred fifty dollars ($350.00).

(3) These employees are eligible to receive salary supplements equivalent to those of teachers for academic preparation at the six-year degree level or the doctoral degree level.

(4) The twenty-sixth step of the salary schedule shall be seven and one-half percent (7.5%) higher than the salary received by these same employees on the twenty-fifth step of the salary schedule.

SECTION 1.(d) Beginning with the 2014-2015 fiscal year, in lieu of providing annual longevity payments to teachers paid on the teacher salary schedule, the amounts of those longevity payments are included in the monthly amounts under the teacher salary schedule.

SECTION 1.(e) A teacher compensated in accordance with this salary schedule for the 2026-2027 school year shall receive an amount equal to the greater of the following:

(1) The applicable amount on the salary schedule for the applicable school year.

(2) For teachers who were eligible for longevity for the 2013-2014 school year, the sum of the following:

a. The salary the teacher received in the 2013-2014 school year pursuant to Section 35.11 of S.L. 2013-360.

b. The longevity that the teacher would have received under the longevity system in effect for the 2013-2014 school year provided in Section 35.11 of S.L. 2013-360 based on the teacher's current years of service.

c. The annual bonus provided in Section 9.1(e) of S.L. 2014-100.

(3) For teachers who were not eligible for longevity for the 2013-2014 school year, the sum of the salary and annual bonus the teacher received in the 2014-2015 school year pursuant to Section 9.1 of S.L. 2014-100.

SECTION 1.(f) As used in this section, the term "teacher" shall also include instructional support personnel.

SECTION 1.(g) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of one billion six hundred seventy-five million dollars ($1,675,000,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to increase teacher salaries in accordance with this section.

PART II. REINSTATE EDUCATION-BASED SALARY SUPPLEMENTS FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 115C-302.10 is repealed.

SECTION 2.(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, State Board of Education policy TCP-A-006, as it was in effect on June 30, 2013, shall be used to determine (i) whether teachers and instructional support personnel are paid on the "M" salary schedule and (ii) whether they receive a salary supplement for academic preparation at the six-year or doctoral degree level.

SECTION 2.(c) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of eight million dollars ($8,000,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to reinstate education-based salary supplements for teachers and instructional support personnel in accordance with this section.

PART III. NORTH CAROLINA PAID STUDENT TEACHING GRANT PROGRAM

SECTION 3.(a) Article 17D of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new section to read:

"**§ 115C-269.33. Paid Student Teaching Grant Program.**

(a) Program; Purpose. – The State Board of Education, in coordination with approved educator preparation programs, shall establish the Paid Student Teaching Grant Program (Program). The purpose of the Program is to support teacher recruitment by providing financial assistance to eligible student teachers during the student teaching portion of their enrollment in an educator preparation program.

(b) Definitions. – For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) Eligible student teacher. – A student teacher who meets all of the following requirements:

a. Is enrolled in an approved educator preparation program.

b. Is fulfilling the student teaching requirement of an educator preparation program in a public school unit.

c. Has a demonstrated financial need according to criteria developed by the Department of Public Instruction, including eligibility for the federal Pell Grant.

d. Has not already received a grant under the Program.

(2) Recruitment public school unit. – A public school unit that employs a grant recipient under the Program as a teacher.

(c) Selection. – The Department of Public Instruction, in coordination with approved educator preparation programs, shall develop a process to accept applications from eligible student teachers for the award grants under the Program. As part of the process, the Department

shall verify the status of each applicant as a student teacher in a public school unit. To the extent funds provided for grants pursuant to this section are insufficient to award grants to all eligible student teachers, the Department may establish a lottery process for selection of grant recipients in accordance with the requirements established by this section.

(d) Grant. – The Department shall award grants of up to five thousand dollars ($5,000) per year to eligible student teachers who meet the selection requirements established by the Department pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. The Department shall allocate these funds to student teachers on a monthly basis during their student teaching assignment.

(e) Recruitment Bonus. – The Department shall allocate funds to recruit public school units each year to provide a one-time recruitment bonus of two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500) to grant recipients who accept employment in public school units. Notwithstanding G.S. 135-1(7a), these bonuses are not compensation under Article 1 of Chapter 135 of the General Statutes, Retirement System for Teachers and State Employees. Bonuses shall be provided to persons who meet all of the following criteria:

(1) Received a grant under the Program.

(2) Graduated from an approved educator preparation program.

(3) Has been employed by the recruitment public school unit for at least 30 days.

(4) Has not previously received a recruitment bonus under this subsection.

(f) Report. – No later than April 15 of each year, the Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the impact of the Program on teacher recruitment, including at least the following information:

(1) The number of eligible student teachers receiving grants and the public school units where they are completing their student teaching assignment.

(2) The eligible student teachers that did not receive grants because of insufficient funding.

(3) Placement rates in public school units of eligible student teachers receiving grants versus eligible student teachers who did not receive grants.

(4) Any other information the Department deems relevant to evaluation of the effectiveness of the Program on teacher recruitment."

SECTION 3.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year the sum of ten million dollars ($10,000,000) in recurring funds to provide student teaching grants and recruitment bonuses for teachers in accordance with the Paid Student Teaching Grant Program established under G.S. 115C-269.33, as enacted by subsection (a) of this section.

PART IV. NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY TO STUDY EDUCATOR COMPENSATION

SECTION 4. No later than March 15, 2027, the North Carolina Collaboratory, in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction, the Fiscal Research Division, and any other relevant stakeholders, shall study and report on strategies to meaningfully increase educator compensation in North Carolina over the next 10 years. The study shall evaluate policy options for strengthening the educator workforce in North Carolina through competitive and sustainable compensation structures and report on at least the following information:

(1) The competitiveness of educator salary schedules in North Carolina in comparison to regional and national educator salary schedules.

(2) Strategies for long-term growth of educator salaries under the teacher salary schedule.

(3) Compensation models recognizing career advancement, mentorship, and instructional leadership.

(4) Incentives for high-need subject areas and high-need schools.

(5) Compensation strategies that improve educator retention.

(6) Sustainable funding approaches for strengthening educator compensation.
(7) Best practices from other states that have successfully and meaningfully increased educator pay.

PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 5. This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.