

**House Appropriations Committee on Education and the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education**

*Follow up information on questions posed during the February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, joint committee meeting.*

**What is the definition of an “at-risk” student?**

G.S. 115C-105.46 requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a definition of at-risk students. In January 2000, the SBE adopted the following definition:

A student at risk is a young person who, because of a wide range of individual, personal, financial, familial, social, behavioral or academic circumstances, may experience school failure or other unwanted outcomes unless interventions occur to reduce the risk factors. Circumstances which often place students at risk may include but are not limited to:

- not meeting state/local proficiency standards
- grade retention
- unidentified or inadequately addressed learning needs
- alienation from school life
- unchallenging curricula and/or instruction
- tardiness and/or poor school attendance
- negative peer influence
- unmanageable behavior
- substance abuse and other health risk behaviors
- abuse and neglect
- inadequate parental, family, and/or school support, and
- limited English proficiency

**What federal COVID funds were used for positions?**

As of October 2022, school districts were using federal COVID funds for 1,443 teacher FTE, 1,150 other certified personnel FTE, and 3,484 non-certified personnel FTE. This is about 1% of total public school employees. School districts had the flexibility to move existing positions onto federal payroll during the expenditure period for these funds. If they chose to take this approach, it is likely they would transfer the personnel back to local funds after the federal funds expire on September 30, 2024. This movement from local to federal funds and back again was observed during the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act federal funding period.

The table below shows the amount spent in federal COVID funds for FY 2021-22 in salary, extra compensation, and benefits:

	FY 2021-22
Salary	\$249 M
Extra Compensation*	\$873 M
Benefits	\$193 M

\*Includes bonus pay, supplements, additional responsibility stipends, and overtime pay.

**Is there any data on the National School Lunch Program’s (NSLP’s) effects on children’s health?**

A [national study conducted in 2003](#) found that students who ate school lunches through the NSLP had increased levels of key vitamins and minerals. They also ingested more dietary fat than other comparable students but less added sugar. After changes to federal nutritional standards in 2010, [another study](#) found that participation in the NSLP reduced food insecurity by 3.8%, poor general health by 29%, and obesity by 17%. These effects were especially pronounced for students that were from low-income families.

**What would teacher salaries look like if they had kept pace with inflation since 2008?**

2008 Average Teacher Base Salary	Average CPI 2008	Average CPI 2022	Inflation Rate	2008 Average Teacher Base Salary in 2022 dollars
\$ 41,798	215.30	292.70	35.95%	\$ 56,824

**What would teacher salaries look like if H966 and S354 had been enacted in 2019?**

The average increase for teachers would have been 4.4% over the 2019-21 biennium, inclusive of step movement. This would have resulted in an average teacher base salary of \$50,552 in FY 2020-21, instead of \$48,516.

**What are the roles and responsibilities of employees in LEA Central Offices?**

LEAs have flexibility in how they use the Central Office allotment. LEAs must employ a Superintendent and a School Finance Officer. In addition, a minimum of \$45,000 must be spent on school nutrition to match federal funds. These school nutrition funds can be spent on a Child Nutrition Director or Supervisor, a manager, or their benefits. Additional Central Office funds may be spent on salaries and benefits for associate/assistant superintendents, community school coordinators/directors, athletic directors or trainers, health education coordinators, maintenance supervisors, transportation directors, and other supervisors, directors, and coordinators.

**What is the breakdown of the total cost of school transportation?**

The school transportation allotment at the state level is approximately \$588 M in FY 2022-23. Of this, approximately \$178 M is spent on bus driver salaries, \$57 M on other transportation personnel, \$92 M on benefits, \$42 M on repair parts and supplies, and \$53 M on fuel. Additional funds are budgeted for charter schools as part of their broader block grant funding.

**Is there separate funding for Newcomer Centers in some districts?**

Several districts in North Carolina have newcomer schools or centers. These schools are generally for recent immigrants or refugees who are English Language Learners. State funding generally flows to LEAs, who can then decide how to allot funds between different schools within the district. To the extent that a newcomer school is a separate school (such as in Guilford County), the school would receive a principal position as long as it has 100 or more students. To the extent that the school is a center within another school, funding would be mixed with funding for the host school.