



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

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# Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

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Advanced Teaching Roles Class Size Report  
*Session Law 2024-57*

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**Date Due: March 15, 2025**  
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024-2025

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## LEGISLATIVE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Session Law 2024-57:

“SECTION 3J.16.(e) The Department of Public Instruction shall study the feasibility of measuring class size by student to teacher ratio, including the method to determine student ratios when a teacher is serving as an ATR team lead. No later than March 15, 2025, the Department shall report the results of the study to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, including recommendations on the technology needed to implement the student accounting model.”

## OVERVIEW: CLASS-SIZE & ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES IMPLEMENTATION

The Teacher Compensation Models and Advanced Teaching Roles Program was first established in 2016 and provides competitive grants to school districts who want to implement new organizational and compensation models to extend the reach of effective teachers to more students and/or teams of teachers.

Advanced Teaching Roles models have been shown to positively impact student learning in participating schools and teachers report that the roles make them feel valued for their expertise. Currently, 34 school districts across North Carolina have been selected to receive Advanced Teaching Roles grants. Interest and demand for the program has grown significantly since it began, and NC DPI regularly receives more applications than funding available.

The purpose of the Teacher Compensation Models and Advanced Teaching Roles Program is to allow highly effective classroom teachers to impact an increased number of students and enable local school administrative units to create innovative compensation models that focus on classroom teacher professional growth. Advanced Teaching Roles models help provide more students with access to high-quality instruction and effective teachers. They also create opportunities for meaningful professional advancement and increased compensation for highly effective teachers and provide job-embedded professional support so that teachers on the team can improve their practice.

There are two primary positions used by Advanced Teaching Roles schools:

- **Adult Leadership Teacher:** Leads a team of teachers, providing coaching and professional support for the teachers and sharing responsibility of the students of all teachers on the team. Adult Leadership teachers are typically released from traditional teaching duties, i.e., serving as the teacher of record, for all or part of the school day.
- **Classroom Excellence Teacher:** Assumes responsibility for at least twenty percent additional students and is a member of a team of teachers led by an Adult Leadership teacher.

Advanced Teaching Roles models are implemented without adding new teaching positions (although some schools and districts may choose to reallocate some instructional support positions, for instance instructional coaches, for Advanced Teaching Roles).

In order to provide Adult Leadership teachers with the release time needed to provide meaningful professional support for the teachers on their team, Advanced Teaching Roles schools leverage class-size flexibility to reallocate students across an Advanced Teaching Roles team. This may result in slightly larger individual class sizes. However, as opposed to a traditional school structure, students on an Advanced Teaching Roles team receive instruction and support from both the teacher of record and a highly effective Adult Leadership teacher.

As a result, it may be more accurate and informative to examine student-to-teacher ratios across an Advanced Teaching Roles team, rather than looking solely at class size. Consider, for instance, a traditional school with five first grade classrooms, each with 16 students. There are 80 students and five teachers in first grade and the student-to-teacher ratio is 16:1.

In an Advanced Teaching Roles school, the same first grade could have four individual classroom teachers and one Adult Leadership teacher. Each of the four classrooms would have 20 students. The Adult Leadership teacher would be fully released from being a teacher of record, or having their own classroom, and would split their time evenly across each of first grade classrooms, providing meaningful instructional support for students, including co-teaching, designing and delivering student interventions, etc. In this scenario, there are still 80 students and five teachers in first grade and the student-to-teacher ratio remains 16:1.

While the student-to-teacher ratios are equal in both examples, the Advanced Teaching Roles school offers the benefit of having a highly effective teacher guiding instruction in each of the classrooms, ensuring each student gets the academic support they need to be successful and helping the teachers on the team improve their practice and better serve students. This is especially important for beginning teachers and the growing number of teachers who are entering the teaching profession with no prior teacher preparation.

NC DPI believes it is feasible for schools and districts to measure and report on student-to-teacher ratios on Advanced Teaching Roles teams. However, currently, districts and schools keep track of these linkages internally and report the data to NC DPI annually as part of the Advanced Teaching Roles program evaluation. In order to do this on a large scale and ongoing basis, existing technology, such as the student information system, must be modified to allow Adult Leadership teachers to be linked to the teachers on their team.

## **THE IMPACT OF ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES ON STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Multiple independent evaluations of Advanced Teaching Roles have found positive effects of the program. These evaluations have been conducted during periods in which Advanced Teaching Roles schools have received and exercised class-size flexibility.

A 2024 report from the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State University found positive schoolwide effects for Advanced Teaching Roles schools compared to non-Advanced Teaching Roles schools that share similar characteristics, including:

- **Advanced Teaching Roles schools produced significant effects on students' math test scores and positive but not significant results in ELA and science.** In math, the evaluation found statistically significant and positive effects equating to a gain of 1.2 months of learning, with the largest effects among high schools. In ELA, the findings suggest Advanced Teaching Roles are having a significant positive effect in the third through fifth years of implementation. In science, we also find suggestive evidence of positive Advanced Teaching Roles effects, but estimates fluctuate more from year-to-year.
- **Schools tend to show increasingly positive effects the longer they implement Advanced Teaching Roles.** For all three subject areas, positive effects on student achievement are driven largely by the first two cohorts of Advanced Teaching Roles schools, which have had at least five years to implement their programs. The findings also suggest that effects across all schools grow up to five years after implementation begins.
- **Teachers in Advanced Teaching Roles schools are more likely to have higher average EVAAS scores after implementing the program.** The evaluation found moderate evidence of positive Advanced Teaching Roles effects on teacher effectiveness as measured by EVAAS. The average pre-post difference in teachers' math EVAAS scores is significantly higher in Advanced Teaching Roles schools than in non-Advanced Teaching Roles comparison schools.

Source: <https://fi.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2024/11/ATR-Evaluation-Report-2024-FINAL.pdf>

Additionally, a 2023 report from the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation found positive effects of Advanced Teaching Roles on the recruitment of new teachers and the recognition of expert teachers, including:

- **Educators viewed Advanced Teaching Roles as a tool to support the recruitment of new teachers.** School administrators and teachers noted how Advanced Teaching Roles supported their ability to recruit new teachers, and teachers recruited for Advanced Teaching Roles schools were also more likely to have higher average EVAAS scores.
- **Advanced Teachers overwhelmingly reported that Advanced Teaching Roles contributes to being recognized and valued for their expertise.** The majority (92%) of Advanced Teachers agree the role is an opportunity to be recognized for their expertise and that their role is valued by other educators (85%).

Source: <https://fi.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2023/09/ATR-Evaluation-Report-2023-Final.pdf>

## **SCHOOL DISTRICTS LOSING CLASS-SIZE FLEXIBILITY**

Under the Teacher Compensation and Advanced Teaching Roles grant program (§ 115C-311), Advanced Teaching Roles schools, in State Board of Education-approved school districts, may exceed the maximum class size requirements for kindergarten through third grade during any term of up to three years in which State funds are awarded to the local school administrative unit where the school is located.

Under current statute, approved school districts are eligible to receive up to two three-year grants and at the conclusion of the term, any class size flexibility approved for an Advanced Teaching Roles school shall expire.

While grant funds are intended to support school districts for a finite period of time as they design and transition to their Advanced Teaching Roles models, class-size flexibility is needed on an ongoing basis to allow for continued successful implementation of the new organizational structure and specifically to afford Adult Leadership teachers the release time they need to support the teachers on their team.

Twelve school districts across North Carolina are nearing the end of the second term of their Advanced Teaching Roles grants. Those grants will end on June 30, 2025. The Advanced Teaching Roles schools in those districts will lose class-size flexibility beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, hindering their ability to effectively implement Advanced Teaching Roles.

Those districts are:

- Bertie County schools
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- Cumberland County Schools
- Edgecombe County Public Schools
- Halifax County Schools
- Hertford County Schools
- McDowell County Schools
- Lexington City Schools
- Pitt County Schools
- Vance County schools
- Wilson County Schools
- Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

These schools will begin planning their 2025-26 Advanced Teaching Roles positions and staffing structures in early spring 2025 making this issue extremely time sensitive. Many districts have expressed to NC DPI concern about their ability to effectively implement Advanced Teaching Roles without class-size flexibility.

## **EFFORTS TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE CLASS-SIZE DATA IN ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES SCHOOLS**

As part of regular program evaluation efforts, NC DPI, in partnership with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, has collected information about the teachers serving in Advanced Teaching Roles positions and the teachers and students on an Advanced Teaching Roles team. This is a large and complex data collection and reporting process for participating districts and is currently the only mechanism for identifying Advanced Teaching Role teams at the state level. For context, in 2024-25, Advanced Teaching Roles models were implemented in 407 schools across 26 school districts with 1,486 teachers in Advanced Teaching Roles positions. An estimated 3,800 teachers were supported by an Adult leadership teacher.

The Department is working now to align district-reported Advanced Teaching Role rosters with class-size data generated from North Carolina's student information system to better understand how class-size flexibility is being exercised in participating schools. Through this analysis, NC DPI plans to establish a model for measuring student-to-teacher ratios on Advanced Teaching Roles team that accounts for the support of the Adult Leadership teacher.

This work has been delayed due to the ongoing transition of the student information system. Upon the completion of this model, NC DPI will share data with the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, no later than June 1, 2025.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEASURING CLASS-SIZE IN ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES SCHOOLS**

To date, data on Advanced Teaching Roles schools, teachers, and teams is reported individually by school districts. These data are critical both to better understand student-to-teacher ratios in ATR schools and to measure the impact of ATR positions on student outcomes and teacher retention. Yet, the data collection process is time-consuming for both school districts and NC DPI.

To improve this process, NC DPI recommends there be a way to identify ATR teachers and link them to the teachers on their teams via the student information system. This would allow local school districts and NC DPI to generate more accurate class-size reports for Advanced Teaching Roles schools that can account for an Adult Leadership teachers' support within the student-to-teacher ratio on the Advanced Teaching Roles team. Local school superintendents can use these reports to affirm they are in compliance with state class-size requirements, as they would in districts not implementing Advanced Teaching Roles.

Further, given the explicit requirement in state statute that Classroom Excellence teachers assume responsibility for at least 20% additional students, NC DPI recommends that Classroom Excellence teachers be counted as 1.5 teachers in the calculation of an Advanced Teaching Roles class-sizes. This would allow highly effective Classroom Excellence teachers to meaningfully extend their reach to more students while also establishing a maximum number of students that can be taught.

Given the ongoing transition of the student information system and the fact that school districts are in various places in that transition, NC DPI estimates that it will take several months and to develop the business rules and technology needed to generate these new class-size reports for Advanced Teaching Roles schools.

In order to ensure the continued effective implementation of Advanced Teaching Roles while this technology is developed, NC DPI recommends extending class-size flexibility for Advanced Teaching Roles schools until June 30, 2026.