



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Advanced Teaching Roles Class Size Report
Session Law 2024-57

Date Due: March 15, 2025, Amended May 16, 2025
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024-2025

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION

Every public-school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is to use its constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right of a sound, basic education for every child in North Carolina Public Schools.

ERIC DAVIS, Chair

Charlotte – At-Large

JILL CAMNITZ

Greenville – Northeast Region

JOHN BLACKBURN

Linville – Northwest Region

ALAN DUNCAN, Vice Chair

Greensboro – Piedmont-Triad Region

REGINALD KENAN

Rose Hill – Southeast Region

DONNA TIPTON-ROGERS

Brasstown – Western Region

RACHEL HUNT, Lieutenant Governor

Charlotte – Ex Officio

VACANT

North Central Region

J. WENDELL HALL

Ahoskie – At-Large

BRAD BRINER, State Treasurer

Chapel Hill – Ex Officio

OLIVIA OXENDINE

Pinehurst – Sandhills Region

CATTY MOORE

Monroe – At-Large

MAURICE "MO" GREEN, Superintendent

Greensboro – Secretary to the Board

VACANT

Southwest Region

The above State Board of Education information is a record of the board members at the time of this document's approval for publication. For the current list of State Board Members, Vision and Mission Statements, go to www.dpi.nc.gov/about-dpi/state-board-education.

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Maurice "Mo" Green, State Superintendent / 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

In compliance with federal law, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Thomas Tomberlin, Senior Director, Educator Preparation, Licensure, and Performance, NCDPI
6301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6301 / Phone: (984) 236-2114

Visit us on the Web: www.dpi.nc.gov

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 that 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 impact student learning positively 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 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 the professional growth of classroom teachers. 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 ensure 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 his or her own classroom, and would split his or her 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.

The NC DPI team that manages the Advanced Teaching Roles program 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 Advanced Teaching Roles positions, and the classroom teachers who are supported, 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, i.e., the student information system, must be adjusted to allow Adult Leadership teachers to be linked to the teachers on their team. The NC DPI team that manages the student information system has indicated that this adjustment is feasible for the 2026-27 school year.

THE IMPACT OF ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Multiple independent evaluations of Advanced Teaching Roles have found positive effects of the program. Notably, 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 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 at NC State University, has collected information about the teachers serving in Advanced Teaching Roles positions and the teachers and students on an Advanced Teaching Roles team.

The Department has aligned 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 has developed the recommended formula shown below to measure student-to-teacher ratios on Adult Leadership teams.

$$ATR \text{ Student to Teacher Ratio} = \frac{\# \text{ of Students on AL Team}}{\# \text{ of Supported Teachers} + (\text{AL Teacher} \times \text{Release Time})}$$

This approach accounts for the support of the Adult Leadership teacher while also taking into consideration the amount of release time the Adult Leadership teacher has to support the teachers and students on the team. Release time is a critical practice that enables Adult Leadership teachers to co-teach with the other teachers on their team, to support whole group instruction, and to provide small-group instruction to students in the classes of team members.

For example, the denominator for a full-release Adult Leadership teacher supporting a team of 4 other teachers would be five because you would add the 4 supported teachers plus 1 (1 Adult Leadership teacher x 100% release time). As a result, if the team served 100 students, the student-to teacher ratio would be 20:1.

In contrast the denominator for a partial release Adult Leadership teacher who is 50% released from being a teacher of record and supporting 4 other teachers would be 4.5. This is because you would add the 4 supported teachers plus .5 (1 Adult Leadership teacher x 50% release time). As a result, if the team served 100 students, the student-to- teacher ratio would be 22:1.

When applying this methodology to the current data set, we find that many Advanced Teaching Roles teams meet existing state class-size requirements for individual classrooms and grade-levels per § 115C-301. However, some schools will be required to shift their staffing structures to ensure they adhere to this new approach.

Additionally, when examining class sizes for Classroom Excellence teachers, current data do not illustrate a clear relationship between class-size and educator performance. In other words, in the current data set, we do not see lower EVAAS growth scores for Classroom Excellence teachers with larger class sizes.

Given the explicit requirement in state statute that Classroom Excellence teachers assume responsibility for at least 20% additional students, and the lack of existing evidence suggesting larger class sizes negatively impact the performance of Classroom Excellence teachers, NC DPI recommends that Classroom Excellence teachers be counted as 1.5 teachers in the calculation of 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 reasonable maximum number of students that can be taught.

It is worth noting that the sample size for this Classroom Excellence teacher analysis is very small and based on only one year of data. This is an area worthy of additional research, and it may be possible to examine this in future program evaluations.

NEXT STEPS FOR MEASURING CLASS-SIZE IN ADVANCED TEACHING ROLES SCHOOLS

Based on this analysis, NC DPI recommends the following steps be taken by the NC General Assembly to ensure continued, effective implementation of Advanced Teaching Roles:

- Extend class-size flexibility for ATR schools within participating Advanced Teaching Roles schools until June 30, 2026, or, at a minimum, waive class-size requirements for Advanced Teaching Roles schools in districts that are losing flexibility (as listed above) until June 30, 2026.

To ensure a student-to-teacher ratio approach can be implemented and monitored moving forward NC DPI will:

- Take steps to modify the student information system such that Adult Leadership teachers can be linked to the teachers they support, and to clearly identify Classroom Excellence teachers, for the purposes of monitoring student-to-teacher ratios and for ongoing ATR program evaluation, with a goal of completing the work in advance of the 2026-27 academic year.
- Develop materials articulating the aforementioned new approach for measuring student-to-teacher ratios on Advanced Teaching Roles teams, including counting Classroom Excellence teachers as 1.5 teachers, by January 30, 2026.
- Communicate new student-to-teacher ratio approach to ATR districts beginning in February 2026 and provide support to ATR districts that need help aligning their models to this approach.