

NCASA Supports Class Size Law Changes Unveiled Today By Senate, House Leadership

Today, House and Senate education and chamber leaders unveiled House Bill 90 that includes an extended phase-in process and full funding for enhancement teachers to address statewide concerns from public school leaders about the existing class size requirements in Grades K-3. Katherine Joyce, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA), stood in support of the legislation at its unveiling to the public and in committee hearings.

“On behalf of the superintendents and other school leaders in our membership, we are pleased that this new legislation provides a reasonable timeline for reducing class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, which is a priority of the General Assembly, while simultaneously ensuring adequate funding and support for continuing vitally important instruction in art, music, physical education and world languages,” Joyce said. “We are especially appreciative that Senate and House leaders were willing to work with us in developing this new legislation to ensure that school districts across the state have a viable solution to concerns they have previously expressed about the existing law on class sizes.”

The class size law changes contained in House Bill 90, which is an omnibus education bill being considered by the General Assembly in their special session that convened this week, include the following components:

- Provides a four-year phase-in to reach K-3 class size caps that otherwise would have taken effect for the 2018-19 school year. This includes new K-3 class size requirements that do not change from current requirements for the first year of the phase-in and are as follow:

Year	Grade(s)	District Average	Individual Maximum
2018-2019	K-3	20	23
2019-2020	K-3	19	22
2020-2021	K-3	18	21
2021-2022	K	18	21
	1	16	19
	2-3	17	20

- Fully funds 3,503 K-5 enhancement teachers through a new allotment established through a four-year phase-in, front-loaded the year before changes occur in K-3 class size requirements, as follows:
 - 2018-2019 – Provides \$61.4 million in recurring funds to support 25% of full funding needed to provide 1 K-5 enhancement teacher for every 191 students (1:191 ratio).
 - 2019-2020 – Increases this allotment’s funding to 50% of amount needed for 1:191 ratio.
 - 2020-2021 – Increases this allotment’s funding to 75% of amount needed for 1:191 ratio.
 - 2021-2022 – Increases this allotment’s funding to 100% of amount needed for 1:191 ratio.

- Places new restrictions on the Classroom Teacher allotment effective 2021-2022 to prevent these funds from covering K-5 enhancement, which will be fully covered in the new allotment in that year. These funds will continue to cover K-12 classroom teachers, enhancement teachers in grades 6-12, self-contained exceptional children teachers, and teachers in math, science and computers, as well as matching benefits. Funds in the K-5 enhancement allotment may be used for classroom teachers but not vice versa.
- Exempts all enhancement classes in Grades K-12 and electives or supplemental courses from class size restrictions and caps, thereby eliminating the need for districts to seek waivers for these classes in certain circumstances as required under current law.

Joyce said that the NCASA advocacy team involved superintendents throughout the process of developing the class size legislation that was unveiled today. NCASA President Dr. Patrick Miller, Superintendent of Greene County Schools, and Dr. Freddie Williamson, Superintendent of Hoke County Schools and President of the North Carolina School Superintendents' Association – one of NCASA's core affiliates – expressed their support for the class size legislation and the important involvement of superintendents in drafting the plan.

“We appreciate the House and Senate leaders who have worked with and listened to school superintendents and NCASA in sending these proposed law changes forward,” said Miller. “We believe our students statewide are best served when we can work in a spirit of collaboration with our lawmakers in achieving the goals they are prioritizing for our schools.”

Dr. Williamson echoed those remarks and said superintendents and their umbrella organization stand ready to help lawmakers with next steps that will be needed during the phase-in of additional class size reductions.

“We are happy that our lawmakers have worked with us to identify a viable plan for making the class size reductions work,” Dr. Williamson said. “We look forward to assisting them with the additional next steps to create additional facility space and find the qualified teachers who will lead the new K-3 classrooms we will be launching.”

After it was unveiled in a press conference at 1:30 today, House Bill 90 next faced a hearing of the Joint House and Senate Appropriations Committee before moving on for debate and votes by the House and Senate, through their individual committees and floor sessions. The legislation was expected to easily gain full legislative approval by Friday and be sent to Governor Roy Cooper, who then can sign, veto, or let it become law without his signature. It is not known at this time how the Governor will react to the legislation, which contains not only class size law changes but also additional funding for pre-kindergarten slots and changes to the current law on Personal Education Savings Accounts that provide state funding for children with disabilities outside traditional public schools.

A joint press release issued by Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) and House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) provides additional information and comments about the legislation. [Click here to view the release.](#)