

Highlights of the Education Budget

The Conference Budget for Education in FY 2022-23 includes net appropriations of \$16.5 billion, which is \$1.0 billion above the FY 2021-22 amount, a 6.7% increase. The highlights of the Education adjustments are as follows:

Community College System

Committee Report Items (Pages B1-B10)

- Adjusts enrollment funding for **the change in community college enrollment** (-\$12.3 million R).
- Provides funds to **expand the capacity of the Small Business Center Network**, which promotes the growth of small businesses by providing training, counseling, and other resources (\$2.8 million R).

Public Instruction

Committee Report Items (Pages B11-B23)

- Provides funding for various technical adjustments based on the **average salary of various public school positions, the average daily membership (ADM) adjustments, and adjustments in enrollment of special populations** (\$30.9 million R).
- Establishes a **transportation fuel reserve** for increased costs of fuel for school buses (\$32.0 million NR).
- Provides additional funding for **School Safety Grants** for: Safety Equipment, Students in Crisis, and Safety Training (\$32.0 million NR).
- Increases the **At-Risk allotment** to reflect the current salary necessary to provide one School Resource Officer for each high school (\$26.1 million NR).
- Provides additional funds for the **School Resource Officer grant program** for school resource officers in elementary and middle schools (\$15.0 million R).
- Provides additional funding for **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** certification test fees (\$8.0 million R).
- Provides additional funding for **Masters of School Administration (MSA) Interns** who are studying to be school building administrators (\$6.2 million R).
- Provides funds to cover copays for students qualifying for **reduced-price lunches** in schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (\$3.9 million NR).
- Provides additional funds for the **driver training program**, including additional per student funding and funds for a fuel reserve (\$5.6 million NR).
- Provides an additional 124 FTE to the Department of Public Instruction for Regional Literacy Coaches and Early Learning Specialists to help with early literacy efforts (\$14.0 million R and \$600,000 NR).

Special Provisions

- **(Sec. 7.2)** Changes the match for the **School Resource Officer Grant** to \$1 in non-State money for every \$4 in State money for schools in low-wealth counties. The match for schools in other counties remains \$1 State to \$2 non-State.

- **(Sec. 7.7)** Requires Public School Units outside of traditional school districts (e.g., charter schools, the renewal school district) to comply with the same policies around **school conduct policies** as traditional school districts.
- **(Sec. 7.9)** Requires the **Center for Safer Schools** to gather data on existing school safety systems, policies, and procedures across public school units and to report this information and recommendations for improving school safety to the General Assembly.
- **(Sec. 7.13)** Creates new guidelines for school districts to establish and administer **virtual academies**. Extends the virtual charter pilot program to the end of the FY 2024-25 school year, at which point participating schools will be eligible to submit a charter application to the State Board of Education.

University of North Carolina (UNC)

Committee Report Items (Pages B24-B55)

- Provides funding for **enrollment growth** at UNC institutions (\$38.1 million R).
- Provides funding for the **operation and maintenance** of newly completed buildings at UNC institutions (\$8.2 million R and \$1.3 million NR).
- Provides funding for **cybersecurity and bomb threat preparedness** at UNC's six Historically-Minority Serving Institutions (\$5.0 million NR).
- Provides additional funding to the **Opportunity Scholarship Grant Fund Reserve** to meet anticipated program demand (\$56.0 million R in FY 2022-23).
- Provides additional funding of \$16.3 million R to the **Personal Education Student Accounts** for Children with Disabilities Program to eliminate the program's waitlist. This is in addition to the \$10.6 million R increase already provided for FY 2022-23 in the 2021 Appropriations Act, for a total increase of \$26.9 million in FY 2022-23.
- Provides funding to the UNC School of Medicine to **expand its medical class size** (\$8.0 million R).
- Provides funding for various campus-specific programs at UNC institutions, including funds for **biopharmaceutical innovation** at North Carolina State University (\$2.0 million NR), **agriculture research** at North Carolina A&T University (\$1.6 million R), and **aviation programs** at Elizabeth City State University (\$1.7 million R).
- Provides \$1.6 million R for additional faculty and staff at the **North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics–Morganton campus**. This is in addition to the \$3.8 million R and \$347,412 NR increase already provided for FY 2022-23 in the 2021 Appropriations Act, for a total increase of \$5.5 million R and \$347,412 NR in FY 2022-23.

Special Provisions

- **(Sec. 8A.1)** Expands the income level requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship Program. Beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, applicants with a household income equal to or less than 200% of the amount required for the student to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch will meet the program's income requirements.