

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023**

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HOUSE BILL 585

Short Title: School Psychologist Omnibus. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives K. Baker, Willis, D. Hall, and Cotham (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations
of the House

April 10, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENACT PROVISIONS RELATED TO IMPROVING THE NUMBER AND
QUALITY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. INCREASE COMPENSATION FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

SECTION 1.(a) For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, in addition to any salary received under the teacher salary schedule, school psychologists shall receive the following salary supplements:

- (1) The sum of six hundred fifty dollars (\$650.00) per month.
- (2) School psychologists who have a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential shall receive a salary supplement each month of twelve percent (12%) of their monthly salary.

SECTION 1.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction for the 2023-2024 fiscal year the sum of eight million one hundred thousand dollars (\$8,100,000) in recurring funds to provide compensation increases for school psychologists pursuant to this section.

PART II. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS GRANT PROGRAM

SECTION 2.(a) Article 21 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-316.6. School Psychologists Grant Program.

(a) The Department of Public Instruction shall establish the School Psychologists Grant Program (Program) to improve the safety, mental health, and well-being of students by providing grants to public school units to recruit school psychologists, to the extent funds are made available for this purpose, as follows:

- (1) Grant application. – A public school unit may submit an application to the Superintendent of Public Instruction to receive a grant pursuant to this subdivision. The application shall identify current and ongoing needs for school psychologist services, including needs related to recruitment, and estimated costs associated with those needs.**
- (2) Criteria and guidelines. – The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop criteria and guidelines for the administration and use of the grants**



under the Program, including any documentation required to be submitted by applicants.

(3) Award of funds. – The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall award grants to public school units to provide signing bonuses to recruit school psychologists, as follows:

a. The Department shall prioritize the award of funds to public school units that do not employ a full-time school psychologist at the time the application is submitted.

b. No individual bonus shall be greater than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

c. As a condition of accepting a signing bonus, a school psychologist shall agree to remain employed in the public school unit for at least one year.

d. Grants provided to public school units pursuant to the Program shall be used to supplement and not to supplant State or non-State funds already provided for these services.

(b) Report. – No later than April 1, 2024, and each subsequent year thereafter in which funds allocated pursuant to this section are awarded, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall report on the Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division. The report shall include the identity of each public school unit that received a grant through the Program, the amount of funding provided to the public school unit, and the use of funds by the public school unit."

SECTION 2.(b) Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction for the 2023-2024 fiscal year the sum of one million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$1,700,000) in recurring funds to establish and implement the School Psychologists Grant Program pursuant to G.S. 115C-316.6, as enacted by this act.

PART III. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COORDINATOR

SECTION 3. No later than September 1, 2023, the Department of Public Instruction shall permanently reclassify at least one position within the Department to serve as a full-time recruitment and retention coordinator to increase the number of school psychologists in public school units that have a demonstrated need that is difficult to fill. The job duties for this position shall include effectively recruiting school psychologists to North Carolina from other states with a surplus of trained school psychologists.

PART IV. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SECTION 4.(a) Article 21 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-316.7. School psychologists internship program.

(a) The Department of Public Instruction shall establish an internship program for school psychologists in public school units. Participants in an approved full-time school psychology preparation program shall receive up to a 10-month stipend during the internship period of the program. The stipend shall be at the beginning salary of a school psychologist. The school psychology preparation program where the intern is enrolled shall provide the Department of Public Instruction with certification that the intern is an eligible full-time student.

(b) Field supervisors in public school units providing instruction to school psychology interns receiving stipends in accordance with this section shall be eligible to receive one lump sum salary supplement of between five hundred dollars (\$500.00) and one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200) in an amount to be determined by the public school unit."

SECTION 4.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in recurring funds to establish and implement the school psychologists internship program pursuant to G.S. 115C-316.7, as enacted by this act.

PART V. FUNDS FOR A VIRTUAL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

SECTION 5. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina for the 2023-2024 fiscal year the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in nonrecurring funds to be allocated to Appalachian State University (ASU) to host a virtual school psychology training program at the ASU campus in Hickory, North Carolina.

PART VI. INCREASE FUNDS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST TRAINING PROGRAMS

SECTION 6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina the sum of one million six hundred thousand dollars (\$1,600,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to be allocated to the following constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina to support the school psychology programs at those institutions with the goal of doubling the number of school psychologists produced:

- (1) Appalachian State University.
- (2) East Carolina University.
- (3) North Carolina State University.
- (4) The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- (5) Western Carolina University.

PART VII. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 7. This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.