

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025**

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**SENATE BILL 850**

Short Title: Pay Teachers What They're Worth Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Bradley (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 29, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO INCREASE EDUCATOR SALARIES, TO REINSTATE EDUCATION-BASED  
SALARY SUPPLEMENTS FOR EDUCATORS, TO ESTABLISH THE PAID STUDENT  
TEACHING GRANT PROGRAM, AND TO REQUIRE THE NORTH CAROLINA  
COLLABORATORY TO STUDY IMPROVING EDUCATOR COMPENSATION.

Whereas, North Carolina continues to experience teacher shortages in multiple  
subject areas and geographic regions; and

Whereas, student teaching is a full-time professional requirement that often prevents  
teacher candidates from maintaining outside employment; and

Whereas, financial barriers during clinical preparation discourage many prospective  
educators from entering the profession; and

Whereas, competitive salaries and stronger teacher preparation pipelines are essential  
to ensuring that North Carolina students have access to qualified teachers; and

Whereas, the purpose of the following enactment is to strengthen recruitment and  
retention of educators by improving compensation and supporting teacher candidates entering  
the profession; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. RAISE SALARIES FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT  
PERSONNEL**

**SECTION 1.(a)** The following monthly teacher salary schedule shall apply for the  
2026-2027 fiscal year to licensed personnel of the public schools who are classified as teachers.  
The salary schedule is based on years of teaching experience.

**2026-2027 Teacher Monthly Salary Schedule**

Years of Experience	"A" Teachers
0	\$5,000
1	\$5,091
2	\$5,183
3	\$5,274
4	\$5,366
5	\$5,457
6	\$5,576
7	\$5,687
8	\$5,796
9	\$5,907
10	\$6,018



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1	11	\$6,128
2	12	\$6,239
3	13	\$6,349
4	14	\$6,460
5	15-24	\$6,571
6	25+	\$6,823

7 **SECTION 1.(b)** Salary Supplements for Teachers Paid on This Salary Schedule. –

- 8 (1) Licensed teachers who have NBPTS certification shall receive a salary  
9 supplement each month of twelve percent (12%) of their monthly salary on  
10 the "A" salary schedule.
- 11 (2) Licensed teachers who are classified as "M" teachers shall receive a salary  
12 supplement each month of ten percent (10%) of their monthly salary on the  
13 "A" salary schedule.
- 14 (3) Licensed teachers with licensure based on academic preparation at the  
15 six-year degree level shall receive a salary supplement of one hundred  
16 twenty-six dollars (\$126.00) per month in addition to the supplement provided  
17 to them as "M" teachers.
- 18 (4) Licensed teachers with licensure based on academic preparation at the  
19 doctoral degree level shall receive a salary supplement of two hundred  
20 fifty-three dollars (\$253.00) per month in addition to the supplement provided  
21 to them as "M" teachers.
- 22 (5) Certified school nurses shall receive a salary supplement each month of ten  
23 percent (10%) of their monthly salary on the "A" salary schedule.
- 24 (6) School counselors who are licensed as counselors at the master's degree level  
25 or higher shall receive a salary supplement each month of one hundred dollars  
26 (\$100.00).

27 **SECTION 1.(c)** For school psychologists, school speech pathologists who are  
28 licensed as speech pathologists at the master's degree level or higher, and school audiologists  
29 who are licensed as audiologists at the master's degree level or higher, the following shall apply:

- 30 (1) The first step of the salary schedule shall be equivalent to the sixth step of the  
31 "A" salary schedule.
- 32 (2) These employees shall receive the following salary supplements each month:  
33 a. Ten percent (10%) of their monthly salary, excluding the supplement  
34 provided pursuant to sub-subdivision b. of this subdivision.  
35 b. Three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00).
- 36 (3) These employees are eligible to receive salary supplements equivalent to those  
37 of teachers for academic preparation at the six-year degree level or the  
38 doctoral degree level.
- 39 (4) The twenty-sixth step of the salary schedule shall be seven and one-half  
40 percent (7.5%) higher than the salary received by these same employees on  
41 the twenty-fifth step of the salary schedule.

42 **SECTION 1.(d)** Beginning with the 2014-2015 fiscal year, in lieu of providing  
43 annual longevity payments to teachers paid on the teacher salary schedule, the amounts of those  
44 longevity payments are included in the monthly amounts under the teacher salary schedule.

45 **SECTION 1.(e)** A teacher compensated in accordance with this salary schedule for  
46 the 2026-2027 school year shall receive an amount equal to the greater of the following:

- 47 (1) The applicable amount on the salary schedule for the applicable school year.  
48 (2) For teachers who were eligible for longevity for the 2013-2014 school year,  
49 the sum of the following:  
50 a. The salary the teacher received in the 2013-2014 school year pursuant  
51 to Section 35.11 of S.L. 2013-360.

b. The longevity that the teacher would have received under the longevity system in effect for the 2013-2014 school year provided in Section 35.11 of S.L. 2013-360 based on the teacher's current years of service.

c. The annual bonus provided in Section 9.1(e) of S.L. 2014-100.

(3) For teachers who were not eligible for longevity for the 2013-2014 school year, the sum of the salary and annual bonus the teacher received in the 2014-2015 school year pursuant to Section 9.1 of S.L. 2014-100.

**SECTION 1.(f)** As used in this section, the term "teacher" shall also include instructional support personnel.

**SECTION 1.(g)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of one billion six hundred seventy-five million dollars (\$1,675,000,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to increase teacher salaries in accordance with this section.

## **PART II. REINSTATE EDUCATION-BASED SALARY SUPPLEMENTS FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL**

**SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 115C-302.10 is repealed.

**SECTION 2.(b)** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, State Board of Education policy TCP-A-006, as it was in effect on June 30, 2013, shall be used to determine (i) whether teachers and instructional support personnel are paid on the "M" salary schedule and (ii) whether they receive a salary supplement for academic preparation at the six-year or doctoral degree level.

**SECTION 2.(c)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to reinstate education-based salary supplements for teachers and instructional support personnel in accordance with this section.

## **PART III. NORTH CAROLINA PAID STUDENT TEACHING GRANT PROGRAM**

**SECTION 3.(a)** Article 17D of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new section to read:

### **"§ 115C-269.33. Paid Student Teaching Grant Program.**

**(a) Program; Purpose.** – The State Board of Education, in coordination with approved educator preparation programs, shall establish the Paid Student Teaching Grant Program (Program). The purpose of the Program is to support teacher recruitment by providing financial assistance to eligible student teachers during the student teaching portion of their enrollment in an educator preparation program.

**(b) Definitions.** – For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

**(1) Eligible student teacher.** – A student teacher who meets all of the following requirements:

**a.** Is enrolled in an approved educator preparation program.

**b.** Is fulfilling the student teaching requirement of an educator preparation program in a public school unit.

**c.** Has a demonstrated financial need according to criteria developed by the Department of Public Instruction, including eligibility for the federal Pell Grant.

**d.** Has not already received a grant under the Program.

**(2) Recruitment public school unit.** – A public school unit that employs a grant recipient under the Program as a teacher.

**(c) Selection.** – The Department of Public Instruction, in coordination with approved educator preparation programs, shall develop a process to accept applications from eligible student teachers for the award grants under the Program. As part of the process, the Department

1 shall verify the status of each applicant as a student teacher in a public school unit. To the extent  
2 funds provided for grants pursuant to this section are insufficient to award grants to all eligible  
3 student teachers, the Department may establish a lottery process for selection of grant recipients  
4 in accordance with the requirements established by this section.

5 (d) Grant. – The Department shall award grants of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000)  
6 per year to eligible student teachers who meet the selection requirements established by the  
7 Department pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. The Department shall allocate these funds  
8 to student teachers on a monthly basis during their student teaching assignment.

9 (e) Recruitment Bonus. – The Department shall allocate funds to recruit public school  
10 units each year to provide a one-time recruitment bonus of two thousand five hundred dollars  
11 (\$2,500) to grant recipients who accept employment in public school units. Notwithstanding  
12 G.S. 135-1(7a), these bonuses are not compensation under Article 1 of Chapter 135 of the  
13 General Statutes, Retirement System for Teachers and State Employees. Bonuses shall be  
14 provided to persons who meet all of the following criteria:

15 (1) Received a grant under the Program.

16 (2) Graduated from an approved educator preparation program.

17 (3) Has been employed by the recruitment public school unit for at least 30 days.

18 (4) Has not previously received a recruitment bonus under this subsection.

19 (f) Report. – No later than April 15 of each year, the Department shall report to the Joint  
20 Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the impact of the Program on teacher recruitment,  
21 including at least the following information:

22 (1) The number of eligible student teachers receiving grants and the public school  
23 units where they are completing their student teaching assignment.

24 (2) The eligible student teachers that did not receive grants because of insufficient  
25 funding.

26 (3) Placement rates in public school units of eligible student teachers receiving  
27 grants versus eligible student teachers who did not receive grants.

28 (4) Any other information the Department deems relevant to evaluation of the  
29 effectiveness of the Program on teacher recruitment."

30 **SECTION 3.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
31 Public Instruction beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year the sum of ten million dollars  
32 (\$10,000,000) in recurring funds to provide student teaching grants and recruitment bonuses for  
33 teachers in accordance with the Paid Student Teaching Grant Program established under  
34 G.S. 115C-269.33, as enacted by subsection (a) of this section.

#### 36 **PART IV. NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY TO STUDY EDUCATOR** 37 **COMPENSATION**

38 **SECTION 4.** No later than March 15, 2027, the North Carolina Collaboratory, in  
39 consultation with the Department of Public Instruction, the Fiscal Research Division, and any  
40 other relevant stakeholders, shall study and report on strategies to meaningfully increase educator  
41 compensation in North Carolina over the next 10 years. The study shall evaluate policy options  
42 for strengthening the educator workforce in North Carolina through competitive and sustainable  
43 compensation structures and report on at least the following information:

44 (1) The competitiveness of educator salary schedules in North Carolina in  
45 comparison to regional and national educator salary schedules.

46 (2) Strategies for long-term growth of educator salaries under the teacher salary  
47 schedule.

48 (3) Compensation models recognizing career advancement, mentorship, and  
49 instructional leadership.

50 (4) Incentives for high-need subject areas and high-need schools.

51 (5) Compensation strategies that improve educator retention.

- 1                   (6)     Sustainable funding approaches for strengthening educator compensation.  
2                   (7)     Best practices from other states that have successfully and meaningfully  
3                   increased educator pay.  
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5 **PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE**

6                   **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.