

North Carolina Arts Education Leadership Coalition (NC AELC) Overview and Position Statement on Program Enhancement Funding in North Carolina

Overview

It has been common and accepted practice that North Carolina provide teacher allotments in all grades and set class size limits in grades K-3 for many years that have *allowed flexibility* for local school districts to fund a variety of teaching positions including positions in visual art, music, theatre, dance, health and physical education, world languages and in other special areas that are usually taught by a licensed teacher specialist other than the K-3 general classroom teacher.

These specialized teaching positions, otherwise known as “Program Enhancement Teachers,” do not have a separate allotment provided by the state and typically local school districts fund these positions within the flexibility between the number of teachers allotted and the class size limits that are currently in place.

A budget technical corrections bill adopted on June 28, 2017 by the General Assembly describes intent language to use data collected to fund a new allotment for Program Enhancement Teachers for local school districts beginning in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

<http://ncleg.net/Sessions/2017/Bills/House/HTML/H528v4.html>

"PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT TEACHER FUNDS

SECTION 7.14. It is the intent of the General Assembly to use the data collected in accordance with the reporting requirements set forth in Section 2 of S.L. 2017-9 to fund a new allotment for program enhancement teachers for local school administrative units beginning with the 2018-2019 fiscal year."

If funded, this allotment will support the continued inclusion of Program Enhancement Teachers in elementary schools including teachers of the arts, world languages, health, special reading enhancements, and nearly any other non self-contained class.

If funding is not provided in next year's budget, the average class size for a specific grade would need to be within the allotment ratio. In effect, a lack of funding will force districts to reduce the number of teachers of the arts, world languages, health, special reading enhancements, and nearly any other non self-contained class beginning in 2018-2019 to comply with SL 2017-9 because this provision removes the flexibility between teacher allotments per classes and the maximum for a single class or for the district-wide average. We understand that there is **no waiver process or flexibility allowed** for this provision.

Position

The North Carolina Arts Education Leadership Coalition (NC AELC) supports the intent language included by the General Assembly and urges legislators to fully fund Program Enhancement Teachers in Arts Education (Dance, Music, Theatre Arts, and Visual Arts) for all local school districts without delay. The class size allotment provision adopted by the General Assembly in SL 2017-9 will go into full effect during the 2018-2019 school year. This provision, without full funding for these teachers, is harmful and damaging to arts education, and therefore children, in North Carolina.

The timing of the General Assembly funding these teachers is critical because the 2018 Session does not begin until mid/late-May 2018. By this time, at the end of the school year, many current educators have already been required by their school systems to state their intention of staying employed (or not) at their school. No one can be expected to commit to staying when they do not know whether their position will be funded for the next school year.

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Excellent arts educators already are leaving for other states or choosing not to teach in North Carolina because of the timing problem with this funding decision. Therefore, NC AELC humbly requests that the General Assembly fully fund Program Enhancement Teachers in Arts Education during one of its Special Sessions or otherwise before its May 2018 Short Session begins.

Lawmakers across the nation have enumerated music and the arts as a fundamental component of a well-rounded child in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). NC AELC supports the ability of North Carolina school districts to offer accessible and equitable arts instruction as defined in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study by qualified, licensed arts teachers across our state. We do not support any provision that will, in effect, cause an unwritten mandate for school districts to reduce the number of arts education teachers in their district in order to comply with lower class sizes. No elementary child in North Carolina's public schools should experience an education without arts instruction by qualified, licensed arts education teachers. We urge lawmakers to act quickly to ensure that the arts are included in our children's future.

NC AELC believes that our citizens and many NC legislators support quality arts programs in our schools and understand that the arts are a natural and important part of a child's growth and development. The positive effects of arts education create life-long success in students.

To contact your legislators about this issue, please follow this link: Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee:

http://ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing_110

Adopted by member groups of the North Carolina Arts Education Leadership Coalition on October 1, 2017.

Arts North Carolina
North Carolina Art Education Association
North Carolina Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association
North Carolina Chapter of the American String Teachers Association
North Carolina Dance Education Organization
North Carolina Music Educators Association
North Carolina Theatre Conference
North Carolina Theatre Arts Educators