



GUILFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION FOR FUNDING FOR CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina places the responsibility for the funding of public school teachers with the General Assembly, via the appropriations made by the North Carolina General Assembly on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly funds school teachers based on funding ratios of one position per a specified number of students at each grade level; and

WHEREAS, the Guilford County Board of Education and other local school boards throughout the State have traditionally been afforded flexibility to allow class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, and elsewhere throughout the education spectrum to vary (with certain caps) depending on the best judgment of the local school boards and administrators, considering the needs of each school and the other available resources, and that flexibility has been instrumental in meeting the needs of children in a large and diverse community; and

WHEREAS, allowing local decision making with regard to class sizes in elementary school has provided the Guilford County Schools with crucial flexibility to design an elementary education experience that is rich and meaningful on a site by site basis, including the funding of teaching positions in art, music, and physical education at the elementary school level. Those positions are not specifically funded by the State of North Carolina, even though they are considered important aspects of the elementary school experience; and

WHEREAS, G.S. §115C-301, as amended by Section 8.33 of the 2016 Budget Bill, codifies funding ratios by statute and precludes both locally flexible class sizes for K-3 and the use of teacher allotment funds for teachers of art, music or physical education at those grade levels, and furthermore results in funding less elementary teaching positions that would be necessary to meet the requirements of the new class size allotments and continue other important teaching services at the elementary school level like art, music and physical education; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education supports lowering class sizes at the elementary school, but without funding the additional teaching positions required by the lower class sizes, the school system is faced with eliminating teachers who are essential to the educational program in order to pay for additional K-3 teachers; and

WHEREAS, eliminating the flexibility to make class size adjustments in K-3 within reasonable limits in this area would have immediate and negative effects on the Guilford County Schools and school

districts throughout the state, forcing districts to adjust staffing by implementing one or more of the following options: (i) cuts in art, music, and physical education teaching positions in elementary schools that are an essential part of providing a balanced quality educational experience; (ii) increase in class sizes in grades four through twelve to free up state teacher allotments to fund those positions; and/or (iii) requesting local funding for those same positions, even though the responsibility for funding teachers in elementary schools is the responsibility of the State; and

WHEREAS, the loss of flexibility in this area would require an immediate reduction in class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, which in turn would increase the number of physical classrooms required at these grade levels; and

WHEREAS, many elementary school buildings cannot accommodate the increased number of classes that would be required by the legislation, and some elementary school campuses cannot accommodate additional permanent or temporary classroom space, potentially resulting in significant strains on school facilities and disruption to school communities and families; and

WHEREAS, by statute, school capital funding is the responsibility of the County Commissioners, who have not planned on allocating a significant increase in capital resources to adjust for the increased need for classroom space; and

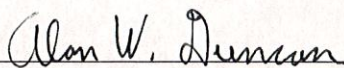
WHEREAS, legislative action is urgently needed to avoid the serious, statewide, negative impacts described above; and

WHEREAS, the new mandate results in over \$16.6 million in additional personnel, capital costs associated with additional classrooms, which estimate does not include the expense of up-fitting classrooms, providing supplies and other resources that accompany increased classes; and


WHEREAS, the new mandate currently operates in a time frame that would not facilitate thoughtful hiring, planning or time to upfit or maximize facility usage in reasonable ways;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Guilford County Board of Education respectfully requests that the General Assembly fully fund any changes to class sizes, allow local school districts flexibility in determining the appropriate class size, site by site, for each classroom in elementary school and make any changes to class sizes with sufficient time for planning, staffing and up-fitting to best serve the needs of the children of North Carolina.

Approved by the Guilford County Board of Education
on the Twenty-eighth day of February 2017
and attested by:



Alan Duncan, Chairman
Chairman, Board of Education



Sharon L. Contreras, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools