

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL 504

Short Title: School Psychologist Omnibus. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Sanderson (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 4, 2023

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ENACT PROVISIONS RELATED TO IMPROVING THE NUMBER AND
3 QUALITY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN NORTH CAROLINA.
4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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6 **PART I. INCREASE COMPENSATION FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

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

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

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

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19 **PART II. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS GRANT PROGRAM**

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

22 **"§ 115C-316.6. School Psychologists Grant Program.**

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

- 27 (1) Grant application. – A public school unit may submit an application to the
28 Superintendent of Public Instruction to receive a grant pursuant to this
29 subdivision. The application shall identify current and ongoing needs for
30 school psychologist services, including needs related to recruitment, and
31 estimated costs associated with those needs.
32 (2) Criteria and guidelines. – The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall
33 develop criteria and guidelines for the administration and use of the grants
34 under the Program, including any documentation required to be submitted by
35 applicants.



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

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

7 b. No individual bonus shall be greater than five thousand dollars
8 (\$5,000).

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

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

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

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

25 26 **PART III. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION** 27 **COORDINATOR**

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

34 35 **PART IV. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

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

38 **"§ 115C-316.7. School psychologists internship program.**

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

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

49 **SECTION 4.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
50 Public Instruction the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in recurring funds to establish and

1 implement the school psychologists internship program pursuant to G.S. 115C-316.7, as enacted
2 by this act.
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4 **PART V. FUNDS FOR A VIRTUAL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM**

5 **SECTION 5.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors
6 of The University of North Carolina for the 2023-2024 fiscal year the sum of five million dollars
7 (\$5,000,000) in nonrecurring funds to be allocated to Appalachian State University (ASU) to
8 host a virtual school psychology training program at the ASU campus in Hickory, North Carolina.
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10 **PART VI. INCREASE FUNDS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST TRAINING**
11 **PROGRAMS**

12 **SECTION 6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors
13 of The University of North Carolina the sum of one million six hundred thousand dollars
14 (\$1,600,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to be allocated to the following
15 constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina to support the school psychology
16 programs at those institutions with the goal of doubling the number of school psychologists
17 produced:

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

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24 **PART VII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

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