

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Individual Class Size Exceptions Waiver Requests

Type of Executive Summary:

- Action
- Action on First Reading
- Discussion
- Information

Policy Implications:

- Constitution _____
- General Statute #115C-301
- SBE Policy # _____
- SBE Policy Amendment
- SBE Policy (New)
- APA # _____
- APA Amendment
- APA (New)
- Other _____

Presenter(s): Mr. Philip Price, (Associated Superintendent, Financial and Business Services), Mr. Paul LeSieur, (Director, School Business Division), and Mrs. Alexis Schauss, (Section Chief, Information Analysis and Reporting Section, School Business Division)

Description:

It shall be the responsibility of local boards of education to assure that the class size and teaching load requirements set forth in G.S. 115C-301 are met. Requests for individual class size waivers are required to be submitted to the State Board of Education after the second school month and the remainder of the school year, if the individual class exceeds the allotment ratio by three students so long as the LEA-wide average class size maximums is not exceeded.

Resources:

Additional teacher(s), if the local board cannot organizationally correct the exception. Within 45 days of receipt of the request, the State Board within funds available, may allot additional positions or grant a waiver for the excess class size or daily load.

Input Process:

A request from a LEA for an individual class size waiver in grades 4-12, or request for additional positions to restructure and alleviate the class size overage situation. The request is reviewed by DPI staff to validate the reason for a request by the LEA by looking at classes offered and class sizes of the school through reports generated from the student information submitted by the LEA at the end of the 2nd month of school. A determination is made based on the information available or additional information is requested to validate the decision of whether the waiver should be approved or denied.

Stakeholders:

Teachers, students, parents, LEAs and DPI staff

Timeline For Action:

This item is being presented for Action on First Reading at the March 2007 SBE meeting.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the waivers pertaining to the class size exception waivers submitted by Alexander County Schools, Beaufort County Schools, and Onslow County Schools. The Department will then notify the LEA(s) of the action taken by the State Board of Education.

Audiovisual equipment requested for the presentation:

- Data Projector/Video (Videotape/DVD and/or Computer Data, Internet, Presentations-PowerPoint preferred)
Specify: _____
- Audio Requirements (computer or other, except for PA system which is provided)
Specify: _____

Document Camera (for transparencies or paper documents – white paper preferred)

Motion By: _____ Seconded By: _____
Vote: Yes _____ No _____ Abstain _____
Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Postponed _____ Revised _____

*Person responsible for SBE agenda materials and SBE policy updates: Doris McCain, 807-3700

Individual Class Size Waiver History

School Year	# Classes Requested	# Classes Approved	Approved By
2006-07	57	6	State Board
2005-06	24	7	State Board
2004-05	40	12	State Board
2003-04	337	16	DPI
2002-03	287	93	DPI
2001-02	90	87	DPI
2000-01	76	76	DPI
1999-00	95	95	DPI
1998-99	93	93	DPI
1997-98	63	63	DPI
1996-97	172	172	State Board
1995-96	33	33	State Board
1994-95	14	14	State Board

Reasons Most Frequently Given by LEAs for Waiver Requests

- Lack of classroom space to organize additional classes
- Avoid forming combination classes
- Avoid reorganization of classes and avoid disruption of learning environment late in the school year
- Limited number of course sections for departmentalized classes in high school
- Distance between schools not feasible for sharing itinerant teachers
- Mainstreaming exceptional children into enrichment classes
- Limited number of teachers available for enrichment classes
- Lack of resources to hire additional teachers
- Shortage of teachers to fill vacant positions

**Requests for Individual Class Size Waivers for the 2006-2007 School Year
Students Over the Allowable Maximum as Required by G.S. 115C-301(g)
As of February 8th 2007**

LEA	School	Grade	Number of Students	Over by	Type of class	# Other Classes ⁽¹⁾	Other Classes Affected and Reason for Request	Recommendation
020 Alexander County (No prior request)	308 - Ellendale Elementary	3	26	2	Self-contained	N/A	The 3rd grade classes are too small to create another class. Combination classes will create a rippling effect across all grades. Due to the number of grades/class at the school it would not be feasible to restructure classes at this time.	Approve
		3	25	1	Self-contained			Approve
070 Beaufort County (No prior request)	308 - Bath Elementary	3	25	1	Self-contained	3	Large change in student population. This K-8 school is currently undergoing construction. The facility cannot accommodate an additional class, nor are personnel available.	Approve
		3	25	1	Self-contained	3		Approve
	329 - Northeast Elementary	3	26	2	Self-contained	3	Large change in student population. The staff is not available to create another class without causing overcrowding at another grade level.	Approve
		3	26	2	Self-contained	3		Approve
		3	26	2	Self-contained	3		Approve
670 Onslow County (No prior request)	321 - Hunters Creek Elementary	3	25	1	Self-contained	3	Large change in student population. There is absolutely no space to accommodate a classroom. All possible spaces are currently being used and elective teachers are floating from class to class.	Approve
		3	25	1	Self-contained	3		Approve
		3	25	1	Self-contained	3		Approve
		3	25	1	Self-contained	3		Approve
	321 - Hunters Creek Elementary	3	26	2	Self-contained	3	Large change in student population. There is absolutely no space to accommodate a classroom. All possible spaces are currently being used and elective teachers are floating from class to class.	Approve

(1) Other class overages (music, art, media, foreign language, etc.) that are created in addition to this class size exception.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Update on Financial and Business Services Research Projects

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Policy Implications:

- Constitution _____
- General Statute # _____
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Presenter(s): Mr. Philip Price (Associate Superintendent, Financial and Business Services) and Mr. Jackson Miller (Research Assistant, Financial and Business Services)

Description:

Discuss Financial and Business Services research initiatives that will enable the Board to have access to relevant data for policy development. We will outline the specific processes that are currently in progress (partnership with Duke’s Terry Sanford Institute for Public Policy, teacher survey on various public education policy proposals, establishment of a research intern program to address (internally) specific research projects, possible other research relationships with Universities).

Resources:

Duke’s Terry Sanford Institute for Public Policy; teacher survey

Input Process:

Partnership with Duke’s Terry Sanford Institute for Public Policy; responses from teacher survey

Stakeholders:

Teachers, students, parents, LEAs and DPI staff

Timeline For Action:

This item is being presented as an Information item at the March 2007 State Board of Education meeting.

Recommendations:

There is no action or recommendation at this time.

Audiovisual equipment requested for the presentation:

- Data Projector/Video (Videotape/DVD and/or Computer Data, Internet, Presentations-PowerPoint preferred)
Specify: _____
- Audio Requirements (computer or other, except for PA system which is provided)
Specify: _____
- Document Camera (for transparencies or paper documents – white paper preferred)

 Motion By: _____ Seconded By: _____
 Vote: Yes _____ No _____ Abstain _____
 Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Postponed _____ Revised _____

*Person responsible for SBE agenda materials and SBE policy updates: Teresa Matthews, 807-3600.

Update on Financial and Business Services Research Projects

Financial and Business Services is embarking on an initiative to create a team of Research Interns from area Universities and Colleges to help structure and conduct research to supplement and supply data for discussions related to procedural, process, and policy changes.

Objective

To create a research team that can supply DPI and the State Board with needed information to make policy or procedural changes.

- To help DPI to be considered a leader in policy research
 - To attract young and enthusiastic college graduates to bring energy to DPI
 - To hopefully become a recruitment tool to attract highly motivated/intelligent individuals that want to help us make a difference.
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Areas of Focus

Incorporating Research into Financial and Business Services' Operations

- Taking the data from the High School Financial Review (research being conducted by UNC) and helping to determine how the findings can be integrated into State Board policies and DPI operational procedures.
- Reviewing the results/data from the differential pay models being implemented across North Carolina (and other States) to determine how these results can be implemented effectively across the State. Initial review will be focused on Guilford County and the Math/Science pilot project implemented in three LEAs this fiscal year.
- Examine budgets/plans outlined by school districts for DSSF funding and determine the effectiveness of the plans implementation on outlined objectives. This will lead to possible implementation irregularities and policy changes to assure that effective practices are implemented.

Implementing Research into Financial and Business Services' Operations

- Funding model for North Carolina's Virtual Public School
- Proper funding levels for restructured and Learn and Earn high schools

Targeted Research on Initiatives Necessary to Accomplish the State Board's 21st Century Goals

- How to encourage teachers to teach in low performing schools
- What are effective teacher pay initiatives that will facilitate teacher recruitment and retention

Update on Financial and Business Services Research Projects

Targeted Research on Initiatives Necessary to Accomplish the State Board's 21st Century Goals (cont.)

- How can funding flexibility lead to more effective utilization of resources?
 - What is the impact of student population growth, and special student population growth, on student performance?
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Current Activities

We are establishing a position that will coordinate this program. Currently, Jackson Miller, a research assistant intern, is working with Financial and Business Services Leadership on developing this program.

- *Survey of Teachers:* Attachment 1 to this document outlines the questions/responses from a teacher survey conducted by DPI. The purpose of the survey is to determine how teachers react to a variety of possible policy changes. This information will help drive possible funding and policy changes and provide data that will help identify additional research projects.
 - *Research Partnership with Graduate Students attending Duke University's Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy:* Attachment 2 to this document outlines the research project selected by the graduate students. The researchers will work with us to examine teacher absences. The students will try and determine if there is a pattern to teacher absences, why teachers are absent, and if a policy adjustment might reduce teacher absences.
 - Other University and College professors have also expressed an interest in smaller scale research projects for their students.
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Structure of Research Intern Team

- We are establishing a network with area Universities to enable us to interview and select graduate students to be employed as Research Interns. We are currently establishing a relationship with North Carolina Central University, University of North Carolina, Duke University, and North Carolina State University.
- The Research Intern program has not been completely defined; but our current plan is to have both full-time and part time Interns.
 1. The summer Research Interns will be employed full-time for a specific period of time (5-10 weeks), and will work as a team on specific research projects.
 2. The part-time Interns will work with DPI in conjunction with their school work at local colleges and universities. These interns will work two to three days a week on specific research projects.

Zoomerang Survey Results

NC DPI Teacher Recruitment Survey
Response Status: Completes
Filter: No filter applied
Feb 14, 2007 8:28 AM PST

1. Please indicate your teaching experience level:

0-2 years	1,040	11%
3-5 years	1,333	14%
6-10 years	1,911	19%
11-15 years	1,939	20%
16-19 years	2,260	23%
20+ years	1,374	14%
Total	9,857	100%

2. I teach in the following grade span:

K-5	4,404	45%
Middle School	2,078	21%
High School	2,551	26%
Other	824	8%
Total	9,857	100%

3. I believe that differentiated pay would be used appropriately for: (You may select more than one.)

Hard to serve schools	5,595	57%
Education level	5,934	61%
Years of experience	7,647	78%
Grade level	853	9%
Subject being taught	2,025	21%
None of the above	719	7%

4. It makes sense to pay teachers more if they agree to teach in low-performing schools.

Strongly Agree	2,761	28%
Agree	3,773	38%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1,540	16%
Disagree	1,167	12%
Strongly Disagree	578	6%
Total	9,819	100%

5. What additional amount of annual pay would encourage teachers to accept teaching assignments in regions of the state that have a hard time recruiting teachers?

Up to \$2,000	643	7%
\$2,001-5,000	2,867	30%
\$5,001-10,000	3,727	39%
\$10,001-15,000	2,308	24%
Total	9,545	100%

6. Twelve-month contracts (with 180 days of student contact, 1 month of staff development, 1 month of planning time) for teachers would be beneficial for planning, curriculum development and professional development.

Strongly Agree	1,980	20%
Agree	2,474	25%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1,652	17%
Disagree	1,963	20%
Strongly Disagree	1,741	18%
Total	9,810	100%

7. With a 12-month calendar, the additional two months would be best used for. (Please select 2 from the following list.)

Structured staff development	2,717	29%
Planning time	5,283	56%
Extended student calendar	987	10%
Curriculum development	2,546	27%
Summer school/Student tutoring	3,238	34%
Personnel growth opportunities	4,362	46%

8. Increasing the number of instructional days would be helpful for both my students and me.

Strongly Agree	791	8%
Agree	1,717	18%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1,972	20%
Disagree	3,171	32%
Strongly Disagree	2,138	22%
Total	9,789	100%

9. A specific student dress code would have a positive impact on all North Carolina public school students' academic performance.

Strongly Agree	3,932	40%
Agree	3,071	31%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1,517	15%
Disagree	911	9%
Strongly Disagree	378	4%
Total	9,809	100%

10. The availability of Internet-based courses (NC Virtual Public School) would be an effective way of ensuring that every North Carolina public school student has equal access to advanced courses.

Strongly Agree	2,568	26%
Agree	4,541	46%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1,637	17%
Disagree	822	8%
Strongly Disagree	238	2%
Total	9,806	100%

11. The current standard course of study for my course/grade places the appropriate amount of emphasis on memorization.

Strongly Agree	417	4%
Agree	3,843	39%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3,255	33%
Disagree	1,820	19%
Strongly Disagree	432	4%
Total	9,767	100%

12. The current standard course of study for my course/grade places the appropriate amount of emphasis on conceptualized learning.

Strongly Agree	616	6%
Agree	5,655	58%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1,875	19%
Disagree	1,355	14%
Strongly Disagree	271	3%
Total	9,772	100%

13. I use podcasting to supplement instruction in the classroom:

Never	4,360	45%
Rarely	650	7%
Sometimes	651	7%
Frequently	77	1%
I don't know what podcasting is.	4,011	41%
Total	9,749	100%

Research Project with Duke Graduate Students

I. Policy Question:

How does exposure to substitutes or absences from a student's normal teacher impact student performance? Do teachers take off a lot of unplanned days during the school year? What are the reasons teachers are absent? What should schools do to resolve the problems associated with teacher absences?

II. Background and Rationale:

Like most of us, teachers will miss work days throughout the school year. However, unlike the rest of us, a teacher's duty to educate children can not be set aside while they are away. Research has shown an inverse correlation between teacher absences and student performance, thus student performance suffers when teachers miss school days. Additionally, the data indicates that most teachers will use all of their available days. It is important to understand the reason teachers miss school days, so that a policy initiative can be recommended that will help change the trend of excessive teacher absences and help improve student performance.

III. Examples of Possible Policy Issues

It could be determined that because teachers are not allowed to schedule time off when students are in school, the teachers take unplanned time off which would lead to unprepared substitutes or possible alternative student learning opportunities. A policy solution to such a finding could be to allow teachers to schedule/plan to utilize their earned annual leave when students are in school.

IV. Field Work

If our proposal is selected, the team of graduate students would gather information by talking with teachers, students, and administrators to answer a number of key questions regarding the effect that teacher absences have on students. Some of the key questions would be:

1. How do teachers access certified substitutes?
2. Is there a gap in achievement between the schools that employ certified substitutes and those schools that do not?
3. Are schools utilizing permanent substitutes?
4. How are substitutes instructed to run the classroom while teachers are away?
5. Do teachers prepare specific lesson plans (that are standard for specific subjects) drawn up before every semester, so that in case of a teacher absence the substitute will have a clear understanding of where the students are in their course of study?
6. What do students think about substitutes? Do they view it as a free day? Do they still feel compelled to perform well?
7. Why are the teachers absent?
8. Is there a pattern of absences in low performing schools that is different from high performing schools?
9. Are teacher leave balances (annual and sick) lower than other local school employees (indicating a higher use rate)?

V. Tools available

- Teacher working condition survey
- The number of absences by school
- Certified and non-certified substitutes by school
- Student performance data