

April 21, 2008

NCATA Speaks to the Education Oversight Committee

The NCATA Legislative Chair appeared before the Education Oversight Committee of the North Carolina General Assembly on Tuesday, April 8 to speak concerning the inequities that resulted from the 54 to 56 pay increase. Judy Barnes, 1st Vice President, and Joanne Stevens, Legislative Affairs Specialist, were in attendance.

To NCATA Members

From Legislative Chair Melinda Zarate:

The Education Oversight Committee gave NCATA ten minutes to speak to committee members on April 8th. After thanking them for their support of last year's pay increase, I used the rest of our time to address the following issues:

- Our deep concern that many teacher assistants with years of experience are now making the same or close to the same as a brand new teacher assistant;
- The ever-increasing instructional responsibilities and educational requirements of teacher assistants; and
- The inconsistency among the LEAs as to how teacher assistant pay is formulated and distributed.

I clearly stated that NCATA is asking for additional funds to help bump up the salaries of those experienced teacher assistants who have worked years and years to help educate North Carolina's children. It was an important day for NCATA - a day our association's members spoke with one voice!

A Note about Salary Schedules

NCAE preceded NCATA at the Education Oversight Committee meeting on April 8th with a presentation concerning the NCAE-sponsored salary schedule bill (House Bill 997) from the last session. Be aware that the salary schedule bill is **not** up for reconsideration during the short session this year. The Education

Oversight Committee cannot vote that bill into law. Last year, House Bill 997 never got past the Appropriations Committee on the House side of the General Assembly. Bills must be heard multiple times and often go through multiple committees in both the House and Senate in order to pass and be sent to the Governor for his signature in order to become law. There have been 9 different salary schedule bills introduced over the past 19 years. None of them have been passed into law.

However, it is important to note that while the Education Oversight Committee cannot vote on a salary schedule bill, it *can* vote to fund an additional increase for teacher assistants based on last year's increase.

We do not know that this *will* happen but we are at least pursuing an action that the committee *can* make happen, rather than a bill that is no longer an option during this session.

NCATA will support a salary schedule *if and when* we believe that it is an attainable goal and the support is there from legislators and the State Board of Education. Right now, we do not have evidence of that support. Rather than push dreams that sound wonderful but have no substance, we have chosen to work towards a goal that we believe will be supported and thus reached! We continue to work towards pushing teacher assistant pay upward with another increase in salary grade.

NCATA is Responsible for 2007's Pay Grade Increase

I want to make one thing absolutely clear: **NCATA laid the groundwork and sought the sponsorship for HB 1390 which was written into the 2007 budget as a line item.** NCATA, with our lobbyist, Joanne Stevens, approached and gained support from the legislators for this bill. Representative Louis M. Pate, Jr., one of the primary sponsors of our bill, along with other legislators and teacher assistants, are well aware of the crucial role NCATA played in making the pay increase happen. We appreciate greatly the support and confidence of our members and NC legislators as we continue to make great strides for teacher assistants in North Carolina.

A Word about our Governmental Affairs Specialist

Joanne Stevens, NCATA's lobbyist, truly does care about our association, our membership, and teacher assistants in general. We are proud to have her representing us! She is professional, well-liked by her colleagues and legislators in Raleigh, and she knows what we need to do! It just isn't anyone who can do what she does and do it well!

This has been both an interesting and educational year for me as your legislative chair. I have learned so much and now I have been on the front lines of the political process! It was eye-opening. I have learned that everyone is trying to get a bigger piece of the limited resources available and that there are often underlying motives to what is said and done. It is very complicated and time consuming and can be exhausting to keep up with. The political world is a hard one!

That said, I will continue to work hard and do all I can for teacher assistants as your Legislative Chair with the help of the Legislative Committee, the Executive Council, Joanne Stevens, and the members of NCATA!

Sincerely,

Melinda

Melinda Zarate

NCATA Legislative Chair

BACKGROUND on 2007 Legislation

Here are some documents from the NCGA website as evidence of our role in the 54 to 56 increase..

Pay Teacher Assistants at Salary Grade 56.

Text	Fiscal Note	Status: [H] Ref To Com On Appropriations on 04/11/2007
Filed (PDF)	-	Sponsors
Edition 1 (PDF)	-	
		Primary: Pate; Jeffus; Yongue; Johnson;
		Co: Adams; Alexander; Almond; Avila; Boylan; Brisson; Brown; Bryant; Carney; Clary; Cleveland; Cole; Coleman; Cotham; Current; Dickson; Dockham; Dollar; England; Faison; Fisher; Folwell; Frye; Glazier; Grady; Gulley; T. Harrell; Harrison; Hilton; Holloway; Howard; Insko; Langdon; Lewis; Luebke; Martin; Moore; Owens; Parmon; Pierce; Setzer; Spear; Tarleton; Tillis; Tolson; Tucker; Underhill; Walend; Walker; E. Warren; R. Warren; Wiley; Womble; Wray; Wright;
		Attributes: Public; Affects Appropriations;

History 	
Date	Action
04/10/2007	[H] Filed
04/11/2007	[H] Passed 1st Reading
04/11/2007	[H] Ref To Com On Appropriations

Note: a bill listed on this website is not law until passed by the House and the Senate, ratified, and, if required, signed by the Governor.

This was NCATA's sponsored legislation during 2007.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 2007

H 1
HOUSE BILL 1390

Short Title: Pay Teacher Assistants at Salary Grade 56. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Pate, Jeffus, Yongue, Johnson (Primary Sponsors); Adams, Alexander, Almond, Avila, Boylan, Brisson, Brown, Bryant, Carney, Clary, Cleveland, Cole, Coleman, Cotham, Current, Dickson, Dockham, Dollar, England, Faison, Fisher, Folwell, Frye, Glazier, Grady, Gulley, T. Harrell, Harrison, Hilton, Holloway, Howard, Insko, Langdon, Lewis, Luebke, Martin, Moore, Owens, Parmon, Pierce, Setzer, Spear, Tarleton, Tillis, Tolson, Tucker, Underhill, Walend, Walker, E. Warren, R. Warren, Wiley, Womble, Wray, and Wright.

Referred to: Appropriations.

April 11, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO INCREASE THE PAY OF TEACHER ASSISTANTS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of one million one hundred fifty thousand two hundred forty dollars (\$1,150,240) for the 2007-2008 fiscal year and the sum of one million one hundred fifty thousand two hundred forty dollars (\$1,150,240) for the 2008-2009 fiscal year to provide sufficient funds to pay State-funded teacher assistants at least the minimum of salary grade 56.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.

Here is the wording of our bill.

4 University Salary Increases

EPA faculty - Provide funds to support a 5% annual salary increase.

EPA non-faculty - Provide funds to support a 4% annual salary increase.

All other University Personnel - Provide funds to support a 4% annual salary increase.

5 State Agency/Department Salary Increases

Provide funds to support a 4% annual salary increase for permanent employees of State agencies and departments.

6 Additional Salary Increases to Judges

Provides funds to support an additional one percent (1.0%) salary increase for judges (total increase of 5%).

7 Additional Salary Increase for Teacher Assistants

Provides funding to increase salaries of teacher assistants to the minimum salary of salary grade 56. Teacher assistants currently earning salary equal to or greater than the minimum salary of salary grade 56 are not to receive an additional increase.


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This shows how the bill was put into the legislated budget. See item 7.

House Bill 997 (= S1370)

2007-2008 Session

Salary Schedule for Teacher Assistants.

Text	Fiscal Note	Status:
Filed (PDF)	-	[H] Re-ref Com On Appropriations on 05/02/2007
Edition 1 (PDF)	HFN0997v1	
Edition 2 (PDF)	-	
		Sponsors
		Primary: Adams; Wainwright; Blue; Alexander;
		Co: Brown; Faison; Farmer-Butterfield; Fisher; Glazier; Goodwin; Harrison; Howard; Insko; Luebke; McLawhom; Pierce; Spear; E. Warren; R. Warren; Weiss; Womble;
		Attributes: Public; Text has changed;
History 		
Date	Action	
03/22/2007	[H] Filed	
03/26/2007	[H] Passed 1st Reading	
03/26/2007	[H] Ref to the Com on Education and, if favorable, to the Com on Appropriations	
05/02/2007	[HA] Reptd Fav Com Substitute	
05/02/2007	[H] Re-ref Com On Appropriations	

This is the NCAE sponsored bill. It did not come out of committee.

Notice the difference in the numbers of co-sponsors between their bill and our bill!