



Phil Berger, President Pro Tempore, North Carolina Senate

Tim Moore, Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives

Hugh Blackwell, Jeffrey Elmore, and Craig Horn

Chairs, House Standing Committee on Education – K12

Deanna Ballard and Rick Horner

Chairs, Senate Standing Committee on Education/Higher Education

Aug. 27, 2020

Dear Sirs and Madam:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge public schools in North Carolina. The situation remains fluid, and we will need the maximum flexibility available to us to navigate the 2020-2021 school year.

We ask for your help in addressing this crisis. When the North Carolina General Assembly returns Sept. 2, there are several areas of critical need that we have identified – areas where changes are needed for the wellbeing of our students, our staff and our district, as well as other districts in North Carolina.

Specifically, we are making three priority requests:

- **Furlough Protection** – Request that the provisions from **SL 2009-451, Section 26.14 E** be reinstated for the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 school years. This provisions allows furloughed employees to remain in active service for retirement benefit calculations, remain eligible for participation in the state health plan, and allows employers to continue retirement benefit payments during furlough.

- **ADM Hold Harmless** - Request that funding for all LEAs remain at their allotted ADM levels, including ADM counts used to set principal pay.
- **Budget Transfer Flexibility** - Allow LEAs to transfer unused funds from budget allotments not used during remote learning (school operations-related costs) to other needs.

Additionally, we seek consideration of three other requests:

- **Waiver of 4-hour Rule for Municipal Day Camps** - Allow municipalities to operate day camps for a full day, instead of the four hours currently allowed, for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.
- **Reduce Required Instructional Time During Remote Learning** - Provide LEAs with flexibility in providing six hours per day of instructional time so that screen time can be limited when needed.
- **Annual Leave Time for Hourly Workers** - Provide an additional 80 hours of annual leave for all LEA employees who cannot work remotely.

We recognize that these are significant changes to the established operating framework for public schools. We also know that the COVID-19 health crisis is far from over and we will continue to face significant new challenges. All of us are in uncharted territory with this pandemic. The changes we are requesting will allow us to continue offering the best public education possible to our students.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Respectfully,

Elyse Dashew, Chair, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Margaret Marshall, Chair, Intergovernmental Relationships Committee

Rhonda Cheek, member, Intergovernmental Relationships Committee

Jennifer De La Jara, member, Intergovernmental Relationships Committee

Dr. Ruby Jones, member, Intergovernmental Relationships Committee