



North Carolina Theatre Arts Educators Overview and Position Statement on Recent Class Size Allotment Issues in North Carolina

Adopted and Board Approved February 17, 2017

Overview

It has been common and accepted practice that North Carolina has provided teacher allotments in all grades and set class size limits in all classes including grades K-3 for many years that have *allowed flexibility* for local school districts to fund a variety of teaching positions including positions in theatre arts, visual art, music, dance, health and physical education, world languages and in other special areas that are usually taught by a licensed teacher specialist other than the K-3 general classroom teacher.

The specialized teaching positions mentioned do not have a separate allotment provided by the state and typically local school districts fund these positions within the flexibility between the number of teachers allotted and the class size limits that are currently in place.

A special provision included in the 2016 state budget will substantially end that flexibility between class size requirements and teacher-student ratios set forth in the allotments in Kindergarten through Third Grade. Without the flexibility that has been provided to local districts it is very clear there will be many unforeseen consequences.

The class size allotment provision that was included in the 2016 state budget (SL 2016-94, Section 8.33(b)) changes the allotment ratios that will, in effect, reduce the number of teachers of theatre arts and all the arts, world languages, health, special reading enhancements, and nearly any other non-self-contained class beginning in 2017-2018. This provision removes the flexibility between teacher allotments per classes and the maximum for a single class or for the district-wide average.

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015/Bills/House/PDF/H1030v8.pdf>

From the 2016 Budget, Section 8.33(b): "Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-301, as amended by this section, and any other provision of law, for the 2016-2017 school year, class size requirements in kindergarten through third grade shall remain unchanged. The class size requirements set forth in G.S. 115C-301 shall apply beginning with the 2017-2018 school year."

If not changed or amended in next year's budget, the average class size for a specific grade would need to be within the allotment ratio. Under this provision the system average for kindergarten classes could not exceed 18 students because teachers are allotted at the ratio of one for every 18 kindergartners (currently the required average for all kindergarten classes within a school district is 1:21). For first grade it would be 16. For second and third grade, that would be 17. We understand that there is **no waiver process or flexibility allowed** under the current provision.

Position

The class size allotment provision for the 2017-2018 school year included in the 2016 state budget by the General Assembly is harmful and damaging to theatre arts education in North Carolina. Lawmakers across the nation have enumerated the arts as a fundamental component of a well-rounded child in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). NCTAE believes that our citizens support quality theatre arts programs in our schools and understand that the arts are a natural and important part of a child's growth and development. Our mission is to advance theatre arts education by promoting the understanding and creating of theatre by all. The positive effects of theatre arts instruction create life-long success in students. It is clear that the class size allotment provision will damage the ability of school districts across North Carolina to offer equitable theatre arts instruction by qualified, licensed theatre arts teachers across our state. We believe it would be in the best interest of our state's children and for their education for the General Assembly to eliminate the class size allotment provision from the 2016 budget and return to the current class size allotment formula. We do not support any new provision or amendment to the current provision that will, in effect, cause an unwritten mandate for school districts to reduce the number of theatre arts teachers in their district in order to comply with lower class sizes. Any such provision is not healthy for students and is a disservice to our teachers. No elementary child in North Carolina's public schools should experience an education without arts education instruction by a qualified, licensed arts teacher. We urge lawmakers to act quickly to correct this harmful mandate to our children's future.

To contact your legislators about this issue, please follow this link: Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee http://ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing_110