

NCASA, NCPAPA PROPOSE PRINCIPAL PAY CHANGES TO EDUCATION REFORM COMMITTEE



Posted on March 14, 2024 by NCASA Advocacy Team

Two 2023 regional principals of the year presented to lawmakers on Monday a proposal to refine the current principal pay plan, as part of the 2024 legislative priorities developed by the NC Association of School Administrators (NCASA) and one of its core affiliates, the NC Principals and Assistant Principals Association (NCPAPA). Dr. John Lassiter, Principal at Hertford Grammar School in Perquimans County Schools, and Ashley Faulkenberry, Principal at Trent Park Elementary School in Craven County Schools, outlined for members of the House Select Committee on Education Reform the need to modify the current pay plan, which has led to wide, often unpredictable swings in yearly pay for many principals across the state due to factors outside of their control.

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Tags: [Ashley Faulkenberry](#), [Craven County Schools](#), [Dr. John Lassiter](#), [ncasa 2024 legislative priorities](#), [perquimans](#)

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Elementary School in Craven County Schools, outlined for members of the [House Select Committee on Education Reform](#) the need to modify the current pay plan, which has led to wide, often unpredictable swings in yearly pay for many principals across the state due to factors outside of their control.

During Monday's presentation, the two school leaders requested lawmakers pass legislation during the 2024 short session that would incorporate additional measures of school complexity beyond just school size, link the principal pay scale to the teacher salary scale, lower the differences in pay based on student growth results, and provide retention supplements based on years of experience as a school principal. These modifications to the existing plan will help incentivize school leaders to work in higher-need schools, while rewarding principals who stay in the profession, according to presenters.

Acknowledging Complexity

The current principal pay scale, which calculates pay based only on school average daily membership (ADM) and student academic growth, was enacted in 2018 following legislative recommendations to increase principal pay, which was ranked 50th in the nation at the time. Presenters on Monday began their presentation by thanking lawmakers for their prior investments in principal pay, while requesting legislators continue their work on the pay plan to recognize the unique challenges of each school, and particularly those with a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

While both presenters shared they lead schools with approximately 400 students, they urged lawmakers to consider that “not all schools with 400 students across the state are the same.” Ms. Faulkenberry noted her school has dozens of students identified as “multi-language learners,” representing 27 different dialects, and as a result, more effort is needed from her and her staff to teach those students when compared to the effort required to teach students from less complex, more affluent districts. Under the [proposed pay plan](#), principals would still earn credit for school size (ADM), but the following other “complexity factors” would also be reflected in their pay with qualifying students: *Multi Language Learners, Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG), Homeless, Economically Disadvantaged, and Exceptional Children*.

Enhancing Recruitment & Retention

The presenters not only urged lawmakers to consider incorporating additional complexity measures, but to also help address a “crossroads” in education, in which educators and school leaders are leaving their professions at increasing rates, with not enough qualified candidates to replace them. “Less than 15% of principals agree or strongly agree that the current pay plan encourages school leaders to transition into the role of the principal,” according to results from a recent NCPAPA survey shared during the presentation. Presenters then shared NCASA and NCPAPA’s proposal to link the principal pay scale to the teacher and assistant principal pay scales to reflect a true career progression and acknowledge the additional responsibilities of school principals. Additionally, presenters urged lawmakers to consider providing \$2,000 retention supplements to all principals with at least five years of experience as a principal, with opportunities to earn higher supplements after 10-14 and 15+ years in the profession.

Next Steps

While some lawmakers in attendance seemed skeptical of the new proposal or requested additional studies be conducted, many committee members, including Co-Chair Brian Biggs (R-Randolph) thanked our principals for their hard work and seemed to acknowledge the need for change. “We’ve got to look at this because a lot of principals that are in tough situations are superstars, but they’re not getting paid like they’re superstars because of the situation they’re put in,” said Rep. Biggs.

In addition to continuing to meet with individual lawmakers to discuss the new

principal pay proposal, NCASA plans to request that the Committee include the principal pay recommendations in the Committee's final report, which will be shared publicly at the next committee meeting on March 25 at 1:00 PM.