



SENATE BILL 447: Turning TAs Into Teachers.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Education/Higher Education	Date:	April 11, 2017
Introduced by:	Sens. Barefoot, McInnis, Smith-Ingram	Prepared by:	Drupti Chauhan Committee Counsel
Analysis of:	First Edition		

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 447 would expand the teacher assistant tuition reimbursement pilot program established by the General Assembly in the 2016 Appropriations Act to include 10 additional local boards of education and their local school administrative units.*

CURRENT LAW: Section 8.29 of the 2016 Appropriations Act created a pilot program for 5 local boards of education (Anson County, Franklin County, Moore County, Richmond County, and Scotland County) and their local school administrative units (LEAs) to provide tuition assistance awards to part-time or full-time teacher assistants working in the selected LEAs to pursue college degrees that would result in teacher licensure. The tuition assistance can be provided for part-time or full-time coursework and academic leave can be granted for classes that must be taken during LEA working hours. Teacher assistants that receive tuition assistance under the pilot program must fulfill the student teaching requirements of an educator preparation program by working in the teacher assistant's employing LEA.

Each local board of education participating in the pilot program can select up to 5 teacher assistants to receive awards of up to \$4,500 per academic year for a period of up to 4 years for the cost of tuition and fees to attend an educator preparation program. The local board of education must set the criteria for the applications from the teacher assistants and the selection criteria must include the following: (i) the teacher assistant must be employed by the local board of education the LEA; (ii) the teacher assistant must be enrolled or provide a statement of intent to enroll in an accredited institution of higher education the State with an approved educator preparation program; and (iii) the teacher assistant must be a resident of the State.

The participating local boards of education must enter memorandums of understanding with the institutions of higher education in which the recipients have enrolled that have the following information: (i) remittance of the award from the local board of education to the institution of higher education; (ii) endorsement of the funds awarded to the recipient to the institution of higher education for deposit into the account of the institution; and (iii) return of a pro rata share of funds to the local board of education if the recipient withdraws before the term ends or the employment is terminated.

The local boards of education must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by September 1, 2017, and then annually with information on: (i) the number and amount of funds in tuition assistance awards provided to teacher assistants; (ii) the number of teacher assistant recipients who achieved teacher licensure and the period of time from an initial tuition assistance award to the time of the achieving licensure; and (iii) the number of recipients who remained employed in the LEA after achieving teacher licensure.

BILL ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 447 would expand the teacher assistant tuition reimbursement pilot program beginning with the 2017-2018 fiscal year to the local boards of education of the following LEAs: Bertie County Schools, Duplin County Schools, Edenton-Chowan Schools, Edgecombe County

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Schools, Halifax County Schools, Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, Northampton County Schools, Tyrrell County Schools, Vance County Schools, and Washington County Schools.

The bill would clarify that teacher assistants may continue to receive salary and benefits while student teaching in the LEA as provided in G.S. 115C-310. The bill further states that all of the local boards of education participating in the pilot program must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by September 1, 2018 and annually thereafter on all of the same information required of the 5 original participating local boards of education.

Section 2 of the bill appropriates \$225,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction in recurring funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year for the purpose of expanding the number of local boards of education and LEAs participating in the pilot program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill becomes effective July 1, 2017.

BACKGROUND: G.S. 115C-310 requires that the State Board of Education have a program to facilitate the process by which teacher assistants may become teachers and consult with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities regarding the program. It encourages LEAs to assign the teacher assistants to different classrooms during their student teaching than the classroom they are assigned to as a teacher assistant. The teacher assistants may continue to receive their salary and benefits while student teaching in the same LEA where they are employed as a teacher assistant.