



SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.24: TeachReadyNC Program

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 7.24

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Prepared by: Legislative Analysis
Division Staff

Section 7.24 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257), as amended by Section 3.9 of S.L. 2026-61 (House Bill 268), establishes the TeachReadyNC Program (TeachReadyNC) for participating local school administrative units (LEAs) to allow individuals to enter the teaching profession by first working as an apprentice under the supervision of an experienced teacher. To be eligible to participate, an LEA must be an Advanced Teaching Roles LEA. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will administer TeachReadyNC in collaboration with ApprenticeshipNC.

Application, Selection, and Renewal: DPI must issue an initial request for applications from eligible LEAs by October 1, 2026, to participate in TeachReadyNC beginning as soon as practicable and no later than the 2027-2028 school year. Each year thereafter, DPI must issue a request for applications from eligible LEAs by November 1. DPI must review applications every three months following the request for applications and approve them on a rolling basis. DPI must approve applications for a three-year term as long as the application meets statutory requirements. A participating LEA can be renewed for additional three-year terms following an evaluation by DPI.

Program Requirements: Participating LEAs will be required to:

- Obtain recognition as a registered teacher apprenticeship program by the United States Department of Labor.
- Require apprentices to work full-time in classrooms with an apprentice supervisor.
- Ensure that apprentices meet certain minimum requirements.
- Provide apprentices with (i) annual compensation that is greater than the average teacher assistant salary in the participating LEA and (ii) financial support for the cost of attendance at an eligible educator preparation program (EPP).
- Provide salary supplements to apprentice supervisors and teachers who agree to be the teacher of record for additional students as a result of an emergency position conversion.

Emergency Position Conversions: Participating LEAs can convert one classroom teacher position allocated to the LEA to its dollar equivalent for each apprentice employed by the LEA. Funds from position conversions can only be used for the following:

- Salaries for apprentices.
- Annual salary supplements for teachers that agree to be the teacher of record for additional students as a result of an emergency position conversion, up to \$5,000.
- For any of the purposes that grant funds allocated by DPI for TeachReadyNC can be used.

Kara McCraw
Director



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Report: Beginning March 15, 2028, and annually thereafter, DPI must submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the current state of the TeachReadyNC Program that includes the following information:

- The impact of TeachReady NC on (i) the number of teachers, (ii) student outcomes, and (iii) teacher retention in participating LEAs.
- Any non-State funds used to support TeachReadyNC.
- The number of participating LEAs that converted a teaching position to support TeachReadyNC and the use of position conversion funds by those LEAs.
- Successful strategies and best practices for participating LEAs.
- Barriers to the expansion of TeachReadyNC.

TeachReadyNC Grants: To the extent funds are appropriated by the General Assembly, DPI must allocate funds to participating LEAs for each apprentice position based on the grant funding requested by the LEA in its application. Grant funds can only be used for the following:

- Annual salary supplements for each apprentice of up to \$7,500.
- Annual payments for the cost of attendance at an eligible EPP for each apprentice of up to \$5,000.
- Annual salary supplements for each apprentice supervisor of up to \$5,000.

If funds appropriated by the General Assembly are insufficient to fund all apprentice positions identified in a participating LEA's application, DPI can reduce the number of apprentice positions provided to each participating LEA. However, DPI cannot reduce the amount of funds provided to participating LEAs for an apprentice.

Appropriation: This section repeals the Teacher Apprentice Grant Program and directs that program's \$1 million in recurring funds to TeachReadyNC instead. Up to \$150,000 per year must be provided to LEAs that participated in the Teacher Apprentice Grant Program for individuals who already began receiving funds under the program before it was repealed.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.