



SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.19: Advanced Teaching Roles Amendments

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 7.19

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Section 7.19 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) makes the following adjustments to the Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) program:

- Repeals "adult leadership teachers" and "classroom excellence teachers" as advanced teaching roles and instead defines the following as advanced teaching roles:
 - Teacher of distinction: a classroom teacher in an advanced teaching role who is responsible for 20% more students than the average number of students taught by other teachers on the teacher's ATR team.
 - Collaborative impact teacher: an ATR team lead who leads a team of four to eight teachers, is not the teacher of record, provides instruction for at least 30% of the instructional day, and is not a school administrator.
 - Partial-release collaborative impact teacher: an ATR team lead who leads a team of two to three teachers, is the teacher of record for at least one class of students, and is not a school administrator.
- Clarifies that ATR team leads are responsible for student performance of all students taught by teachers on the lead teacher's team in addition to the student's classroom teacher.
- Allows ATR units to designate additional schools as ATR schools more quickly, as follows:
 - For the first year, up to the lesser of five schools or 40% of the unit's schools.
 - For any year after the first, up to the greater of 3 schools or 25% of the unit's schools, up to a maximum of 10 schools per year.
- Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a rule by January 1, 2027, that describes the process and criteria for the review of ATR schools that must occur every five years. The SBE must also publish a timetable of these reviews.
- Requires the SBE to place an ATR unit or school on probation following a five-year review that shows that the unit or school failed to meet criteria adopted by the SBE, rather than immediately terminating the unit or school. If placed on probation, the unit or school has one year to remedy the concerns identified by the SBE. Following the one-year probation, if a unit or school does not remedy the concerns, the SBE must terminate the ATR status of the unit or school.
- Allows the SBE to terminate the ATR status of a unit or school outside of the five-year review period if the SBE finds that the unit or school is not following the approved ATR plan.

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- Specifies that ATR grants include (i) one-time planning funds and (ii) up to six years of implementation funds (as two grants with up to three-year terms). The SBE can grant a second term of implementation funds in its discretion. The SBE must allocate the funds as follows:
 - \$150,000 in one-time planning funds prior to or during the first year of the ATR unit's initial grant term.
 - \$15,000 per ATR school in implementation funds for each year the ATR unit receives grant funds. The ATR unit can receive up to three years of implementation funding for each ATR school.
- Clarifies that grant funds can only be used for the stated purposes.
- Allows ATR units to designate up to 15% of the teachers in each ATR school as collaborative impact teachers and up to 5% as teachers of distinction. When calculating the number of allowed positions, the ATR unit must round to the nearest whole position. Two partial-release collaborative impact leaders count as one collaborative impact leader position.
- Establishes the following supplements for teachers in advanced teaching roles:
 - \$10,000 for collaborative impact leaders.
 - \$5,000 for partial-release collaborative impact leaders.
 - \$3,000 for teachers of distinction.
- Encourages ATR units to use funding from other sources to provide salary supplements in addition to the State-funded supplements.
- Allows the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to use up to \$300,000 in each fiscal year to evaluate the ATR program and the compensation plans.
- Requires DPI to issue guidance to ATR units on how to effectively develop staffing plans and budgets, including how to maximize resources across multiple funding sources and the reach of teachers in advanced teaching roles to a greater number of students by February 1, 2027.

This section also requires the SBE to authorize Johnston County Schools to participate in the ATR program beginning in the 2026-2027 school year and to award a grant to Johnston County Schools for an initial term if it submits a qualifying proposal to participate no later than August 6, 2026.

For the 2026-2027 school year, the SBE must award funds to ATR units for salary supplements for teachers in advanced teaching roles as follows:

- \$10,000 for (i) collaborative impact leaders and (ii) teachers who agreed to serve as adult leadership teachers for the 2026-2027 school year prior to June 30, 2026.
- \$5,000 for partial-release collaborative impact leaders.
- \$3,000 for teachers of distinction.

Teachers serving in an advanced teaching role for the 2026-2027 school year can only receive one salary supplement for that service.

This section became effective July 7, 2026, and applies beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.