



North Carolina
School Psychology Association

DRAFT Legislative Agenda 1.23.24

WHAT IS NEEDED?		WHY?
<p>Enact HB 585/SB 448 School Psychologist Omnibus</p>		
	Sections of the Bill	
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increase of \$650/month 12% Supplement for those who are Nationally Certified (comparable to teachers and counselors who receive this supplement for their National Board Certification) Total Needed: \$8.1 Million 	NC must be able to compete with the higher salaries offered in our neighboring Southeast states.
2.	<p><u>School Psychologist (SP) Grant Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide up to \$5,000 as a recruitment bonus for SPs accepting a job for at least one year Prioritize public school units that do not have a full-time SP Need \$1.7 Million [NEW IDEA: ALLOW UP TO 3% OF THIS FUNDING TO BE USED BY DPI'S RECRUITMENT/RETENTION COORDINATOR'S PROGRAM??? 	NC has <u>26 entire school systems and countless charter schools</u> that do not have even 1 full-time SP. That is <u>over 72,500 NC students</u> who do not have access to the dire mental health services they need today.
4.	<p><u>SP Internship Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interns are paid a 10-month stipend for completing their internship in a NC public school. Field supervisors of these SP Interns are compensated from \$500-\$1,200 to provide mandatory instruction DPI and the State Board of Education also requested this Program in 2023. Total needed: \$5 Million 	This is a critical element to recruiting and retaining SPs from both in-state and out-of-state. NC needs more SPs to meet the recommended ratio of 1 SP: 500 students. In 2023, Cabarrus County Schools was able to <u>fill all vacancies</u> with this paid-internship model.
5.	<p><u>Virtual SP Training Program at Appalachian State University's Hickory Campus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-of-its-kind in the Southeast where SP candidates can take qualifying courses remotely Allows educators and other professionals to earn their SP degree while staying employed in their home district Total needed: \$5 Million 	NC must increase its production of SPs. This innovative program will increase the pipeline of SPs and will recruit both in-state and out-of-state candidates.
6.	<p>Increase Funding by \$1.6 Million for NC's 5 SP Training Programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ASU 	The goal is to double the number of SPs who



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2. ECU
3. NC State
4. UNC-Chapel Hill
5. Western Carolina

graduate in NC each year
from about 50 to 100 SPs.

2024-25 PRIOR DRAFT Legislative Agenda 1.21.24

School Psychologists are the Psychologists who know the most about Education and the Educators who know the most about Psychology.

The Problem: Tragically, North Carolina's teen suicide rate is at an all-time high. Suicide is now the second-leading cause of death among 10-17 year-olds in North Carolina (second only to homicide). According to the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data presented to the NC Child Fatality Task Force¹:

1. Over 20% of NC's high school students seriously considered attempting suicide
2. 18% made a plan of how they would attempt suicide
3. Nearly 10% attempted suicide
4. 57 died by suicide in 2021²

This must stop now – NC School Psychologists are uniquely qualified to conduct the most complex student behavioral threat assessments. In 2022, 26 of our school systems do not have even 1 full-time employed School Psychologist: that's roughly 72,439 students without access to the dire mental health services they need today. Additionally, The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of 1:500 – 1 School Psychologist to 500 students – Currently, **North Carolina's ratio is 1:1,943**, which is nearly four times the national recommendation.

The Solution: Immediately recruit and retain both in-state and out-of-state School Psychologists to North Carolina.

The Steps to get there:

Pass the School Psychologist Omnibus Bill which includes

1. Increase salaries for School Psychologists by **at least \$6,500 more** and work toward North Carolina offering competitive and attractive pay when compared with other states in the Southeast region.

¹ <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/72555>

² Data from the Child Fatality Task Force

(<https://www.wral.com/nc-child-suicides-continue-to-rise-state-data-shows/20483088/>)



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(change wording to match \$650 per month in bill?)

2. Enact a **12% Salary Supplement for Nationally Certified School Psychologists** (comparable to teachers' and school counselors' supplement for National Board Certifications).
3. Fund your 2021 "School Psychologist Recruitment and Retention Grant Program" (at \$1.7M) with **recurring dollars** as it will take many years to reach a goal of 1 School Psychologist in each NC school.
4. Use recurring dollars to ensure that mandatory School Psychologist internships are **paid** and provide **stipends** for field supervisors to guarantee a pipeline of School Psychologists. DPI and the State Board of Education are requesting \$5 Million in 2023.