

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution

**RESOLUTION REGARDING K-3 CLASS SIZE REDUCTION IMPLEMENTATION BY
DURHAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

WHEREAS, pursuant to S.L. 2017-9, local school districts in 2018-19 are required to set class size averages in grades K-3 that equal the State classroom teacher funding ratios and will have to meet more restrictive individual class size maximums across those grade levels; and

WHEREAS, an immediate reduction in the K-3 class size maximum will worsen an already very difficult environment for LEAs in finding licensed and qualified teachers to fill classrooms, most likely leading to more classrooms taught by long-term substitutes or lateral-entry teachers, who do not have the pedagogy and classroom management training necessary; and

WHEREAS, equalizing the average and funded K-3 class size ratios will result in the loss of flexibility to generate State funding for teaching positions in program enhancement courses like art, music, physical education; and

WHEREAS, in Section 2.1 of S.L. 2017-197, the General Assembly declared its intent to create a new funding stream for program enhancement teachers starting in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, separate, additional funding allotments for program enhancement teachers like art, music, and physical education are essential to provide each student in North Carolina a sound and basic education, and

WHEREAS, even when this funding is provided, there are still classroom space and staffing challenges in implementing the new K-3 class size requirements which are outlined below; and

WHEREAS, the Durham County Commissioners, City Council and Board of Education established a Pre-K Task Force to increase early childhood education in our community and are committed to expanding access to early childhood education rather than reducing Pre-K classrooms in an attempt to make space for the K-3 class size reductions; and

WHEREAS, the immediate reduction in individual class size maximums in grades K-3 would in turn increase the number of physical classrooms required at these grade levels, adding to already \$399 million in unmet school capital needs in Durham; and

WHEREAS, Durham Public Schools estimates that in order to comply, Durham Public Schools would need to build 63 new classrooms and hire 90 additional teachers for 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, Durham does not have capital funding to build new classrooms or purchase additional modular classrooms and a new modular unit requires approximately one year to bring online; and

WHEREAS, Durham lacks space to implement the class size reductions and has already converted art and music rooms into traditional classrooms and has those teachers travel from room to room with a cart to deliver program enhancement classes in traditional classrooms; but this doesn't work well with unique aspects of art and music education; and

WHEREAS, art classes use messy supplies such as paint and clay while music classes generate loud sounds that, without adequate sound proof walls, will travel to neighboring classrooms and disrupt learning in those classes; and

WHEREAS, districts that lack space to implement the class size reductions may need to also convert gymnasiums into traditional classrooms, which would mean that physical education courses are held outdoors with no alternative for days with adverse weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, County Commissioners and Local Boards of Education are already working together to budget and plan for the 2018-19 academic year and this issue requires immediate attention by the NCGA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the members of the Durham County Board of Commissioners respectfully request that the General Assembly fully fund small classes and slow implementation of the K-3 class size reductions outlined in S.L. 2017-9 through a multi-year phase-in that allows time for the legislature and school districts to address the challenges delineated above, and

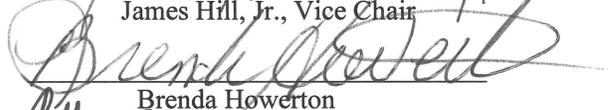
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NCGA provide full funding for all enhancement teachers, and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the NCGA approve HB 866: Public School Building Bond Act of 2017, so that districts across North Carolina are better able to meet their school facility needs associated with class size reduction and growth.


Wendy Jacobs, Chair


Heidi Carter


James Hill, Jr., Vice Chair


Brenda Howerton


Ellen W. Reckhow

