

## **\$1.6 Billion COVID 19 Relief Package Passes General Assembly**

By Administrator

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The state General Assembly has approved a relief package for North Carolina communities that includes \$1.6 billion to help local school districts safely reopen and an extension of \$335 state grants for families without enough earnings to file a tax return.

Senate Bill 36 COVID Relief Bill Modifications extends the deadline for using previous relief allocations for schools and emergency needs, and appropriates an additional \$95 million of federal funding for vaccine distribution. Up to \$546 million in eligible emergency rent relief is also appropriated in the bill, with another \$155 million in federal funds for local governments with over 200,000 people.

A \$30 million rural broadband fund is also secured through the legislation to increase economic and education connectivity through the legislature's successful Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program.

Senior House Appropriations Committee Co-Chairs Jason Saine (R-Lincoln), Dean Arp (R-Union), and Donny Lambeth (R-Forsyth) released a joint statement:

"The General Assembly is delivering additional relief as soon as possible through bipartisan legislation that ensures state and federal funding reaches North Carolina communities now, and we will maintain this commitment to a strong recovery this session," the Senior House Appropriations Co-Chairs said Thursday.

Speaker Moore said \$1.6 billion for public schools in the legislation can support safe school reopenings and robust summer programs for remedial learning:

"Powerful education funding in this bill will help students safely return to the classroom and receive robust summer learning opportunities to overcome the challenges of the last year and realize their highest academic and career potentials," Speaker Moore said Thursday.

"This legislation represents a strong beginning to another successful session delivering on our promises to serve North Carolinians in need, and I appreciate the bipartisan work of my General Assembly colleagues to accomplish this important step for families and businesses who are hurting."

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