RESOLUTION BY THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SUPPORTING CALENDAR FLEXIBILITY

WHEREAS, North Carolina law provides the Buncombe County Board of Education powers of supervision and control of the public schools located within Buncombe County;

WHEREAS, local control over establishing school calendars is an integral component of school system supervision and the administrative powers with which the Buncombe County Board of Education has been vested;

WHEREAS, in 2004 the North Carolina General Assembly set a statewide, mandatory start and end date for all school districts (the school calendar law);

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly amended the school calendar law in 2012 to further restrict the starting date for schools;

WHEREAS, the mandated school start date is no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and the end date is no later than the Friday closest to June 11;

WHEREAS, the school calendar law resulted in school starting no earlier than August 29 for the 2022-2023 school year, no earlier than August 28 for the 2023-2024 school year, no earlier than August 26 for the 2024-2025 school year, and no earlier than August 25 for the current 2025-2026 school year;

WHEREAS, a late August start date means the schools within Buncombe County are unable to complete the first semester until mid to late January;

WHEREAS, the school calendar law requires high school students to take first semester exams after the winter break, which negatively impacts students and faculty and further, is an inefficient use of instructional time;

WHEREAS, the school calendar law does not align with community college and university calendars, making it nearly impossible for high school students who graduate at the end of the first semester to enroll in college courses in January because college courses start before or at the same time as high school students complete final exams;

WHEREAS, exams for Advanced Placement classes are given on the same day nationwide, and the current calendar law shortens the amount of time that Buncombe County students have to learn the material and prepare before the exam;

WHEREAS, it is well-documented through multiple studies that children will experience a phenomenon known as learning loss during breaks, which has a disproportionate impact on low-income children;

WHEREAS, with little flexibility built into the calendar, scheduling make-up days is extremely challenging, increasing the likelihood of using unpopular days like spring break and Saturdays as make-up days;

WHEREAS, with little flexibility built into the calendar, scheduling workdays and professional development during the school year for faculty and staff is almost impossible during the Fall semester and remains challenging in the Spring semester, despite the significant increase in areas which faculty and staff are required by law to receive training;

WHEREAS, fall sports and band programs have not changed to coincide with the State-mandated school calendar causing some football and band events to occur weeks before school begins;

WHEREAS, neither charter schools nor private schools are required to follow the school calendar law;

WHEREAS, allowing schools to start earlier in August will not impact the overall length of the summer break as the school year will also end earlier;

WHEREAS, parents overwhelmingly support a school calendar where the Fall semester ends in December;

WHEREAS, local school boards are better equipped to understand the balancing act of meeting the community's needs and maximizing student success;

WHEREAS, restoring local control of school calendars will allow the Buncombe County Board of Education to meet the calendar preferences of Buncombe County's families, educators, and businesses in our community while allowing for innovative experimental approaches to improve student achievement;

WHEREAS, over the last several years, school districts and other local governments across North Carolina have adopted similar resolutions requesting the General Assembly to provide local control and flexibility in setting the school calendar;

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2022, the North Carolina House Select Committee on An Education System for North Carolina's Future issued its finding that the current school calendar law is not best suited to the needs of students and educators and that local boards of education should be given greater calendar flexibility; the Select Committee recommended the "General Assembly take action and change the school calendar law."

WHEREAS, in 2025, the North Carolina Senate introduced and passed Senate Bill 754, which allows local school systems to start on the Monday closest to August 19, but only if each semester has the equal number of school days; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina House of Representatives has yet to vote on SB 754;

WHEREAS, if SB 754 is adopted and signed into law, school systems could start school one week earlier so long as each semester has an equal number of school days.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Buncombe County Board of Education supports an amendment to the current school calendar law, providing local school boards more flexibility in the start date of the school calendar

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

1. In the alternative to full calendar flexibility, the Board of Education supports a revision to SB 754, specifically the removal of the requirement that each semester of the school year have an equal number of school days.

2. The Chair and Superintendent are authorized to disseminate this Resolution to members of the North Carolina General Assembly.

3. The Board encourages parents, students, and other community members to contact their North Carolina Legislators to advocate for calendar flexibility.

4. The Board requests the Buncombe County Commissioners, and other local governments within Buncombe County, to adopt a resolution advocating calendar flexibility.

Adopted by the Buncombe County Board of Education, this the 15th day of January 2026.

Rob Elliot, Chair

Kim Plemmons, Vice Chair

Dr. Rob Jackson, Superintendent and
Ex-officio Secretary to the Board