

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015

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SENATE BILL 554  
Education/Higher Education Committee Substitute Adopted 6/24/16

Short Title: School Building Leases.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 30, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY TO LOCAL BOARDS OF  
EDUCATION TO ENTER INTO LEASES FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND SCHOOL  
FACILITIES AND TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO MAKE  
FAST-TRACK CHARTER SCHOOL REPLICATION DECISIONS WITHIN ONE  
HUNDRED TWENTY DAYS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 115C-530 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 115C-530. ~~Operational-Operating~~ leases of school buildings and school facilities.**

(a) Local boards of education may enter into ~~operational-operating~~ leases of real or personal property for use as school buildings or school facilities. ~~Operational-Operating~~ leases for terms of less than three years shall not be subject to the approval of the board of county commissioners. ~~Operational-Operating~~ leases for terms of three years or longer, including periods that may be added to the original term through the exercise of options to renew or extend, are permitted if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The budget resolution includes an appropriation authorizing the current fiscal year's portion of the obligation.
- (2) An unencumbered balance remains in the appropriation sufficient to pay in the current fiscal year the sums obligated by the lease for the current fiscal year.
- (3) The leases are approved by a resolution adopted by the board of county commissioners. If an ~~operational-operating~~ lease is approved by the board of county commissioners, in each year the county commissioners shall appropriate sufficient funds to meet the amounts to be paid during the fiscal year under the lease.
- (4) Any construction, repair, or renovation of the property is in compliance with the requirements of G.S. 115C-521(c) relating to energy ~~guidelines-guidelines~~ and G.S. 115C-521(c1) relating to science laboratory areas.

For purposes of this section, an ~~operational-operating~~ lease is defined according to generally accepted accounting principles and may be for new or existing buildings.

(b) Local boards of education may enter into contracts for the construction, repair, or renovation of leased property if (i) the budget resolution includes an appropriation authorizing the obligation, (ii) an unencumbered balance remains in the appropriation sufficient to pay in the current fiscal year the sums obligated by the transaction for the current fiscal year, and (iii) the construction, repair, or renovation is in compliance with the requirements of G.S. 115C-521(c) relating to energy ~~guidelines-and~~ G.S. 115C-521(c1) relating to science laboratory areas. Construction, repair, or renovation work undertaken or contracted by a private developer is subject



1 to the requirements of Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. Contracts for new  
2 construction and renovation that are subject to the bidding requirements of G.S. 143-129(a) and  
3 which do not constitute continuing contracts for capital outlay must be approved by the board of  
4 county commissioners.

5 (c) ~~Operational-Operating~~ leases and contracts entered into under this section are subject to  
6 approval by the Local Government Commission under Article 8 of Chapter 159 of the General  
7 Statutes if they meet the standards set out in G.S. 159-148(a)(1), 159-148(a)(2), and  
8 159-148(a)(3). For purposes of determining whether the standards set out in G.S. 159-148(a)(3)  
9 have been met, only the five hundred thousand dollar (\$500,000) threshold shall apply."

10 **SECTION 2.** Article 37 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by  
11 adding new sections to read:

12 "**§ 115C-531.1. Capital leases of school buildings and school facilities.**

13 (a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

14 (1) Capital lease. – A capital lease as defined by generally accepted accounting  
15 principles, regardless of how the parties describe the agreement.

16 (2) Private developer. – The entity with which the school board enters into a capital  
17 lease or build-to-suit lease under the provisions of this section.

18 (b) Authorization. – Local boards of education may enter into capital leases of real or  
19 personal property for use as school buildings or school facilities. The capital lease may relate to an  
20 existing building or a new school building to be constructed. The term of any capital lease,  
21 including any renewal periods, shall not exceed 40 years from the expected date that the local  
22 board of education will take occupancy of the property that is the subject of a capital lease.  
23 Subsections (c) and (d) of G.S. 115C-521 do not apply to a capital lease entered into under this  
24 section.

25 (c) Construction, Repairs, and Renovation. – The provisions of G.S. 115C-530(b) apply to  
26 a capital lease under this section. A capital lease entered into under this section may provide that  
27 the private developer is responsible for providing, or contracting for, construction, repair, or  
28 renovation work. Construction, repair, or renovation work undertaken or contracted by a private  
29 developer is not subject to the requirements of Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.  
30 Construction, repair, or renovation work undertaken or contracted by the private developer  
31 involving the estimated expenditure of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) or more is  
32 subject to the provisions of G.S. 115C-532.1 related to build-to-suit capital leases.

33 (d) Nonsubstitution Clause. – A capital lease shall not contain a nonsubstitution clause that  
34 restricts the right of a local board to continue to provide a service or activity or to replace or  
35 provide a substitute for any property financed or purchased by the capital lease.

36 (e) No Deficiency Judgment; No Pledge of Taxing Power. – No deficiency judgment may  
37 be rendered against any local board of education or any unit of local government, as defined in  
38 G.S. 160A-20(h), in any action for breach of a contractual obligation authorized by this section,  
39 and the taxing power of a unit is not and may not be pledged directly or indirectly to secure any  
40 moneys due under a contract authorized by this section. A capital lease shall state that it does not  
41 constitute a pledge of the taxing power or full faith and credit of the local board of education or  
42 board of county commissioners.

43 (f) Budgetary Accounting. – A capital lease entered into under this section shall be  
44 considered a continuing contract for capital outlay and is subject to G.S. 115C-441(c1); provided,  
45 however, notwithstanding any provision of G.S. 115C-441(c1) or G.S. 115C-426, in each fiscal  
46 year, the appropriation of funds by the county for the payment of amounts due under the capital  
47 lease shall be at the discretion of the board of county commissioners.

48 (g) Local Government Commission Approval. – Capital leases entered into under this  
49 section are subject to approval by the Local Government Commission under Article 8 of Chapter  
50 159 of the General Statutes if they meet the standards set out in G.S. 159-148(a)(1), 159-148(a)(2),  
51 and 159-148(a)(3). For purposes of determining whether the standards set out in

1 G.S. 159-148(a)(3) have been met, only the five-hundred-thousand-dollar (\$500,000) threshold  
2 applies.

3 (h) No Agreements on Student Assignment. – A capital lease may not contain any  
4 provision with respect to the assignment of specific students or students from a specific area to  
5 any specific school.

6 (i) Lien Laws Not Affected. – All laws relating to liens on private property apply to  
7 private property interests in a capital lease project undertaken under this section.

8 (j) Public-Private Partnership Construction Contract Law Not Applicable. – The  
9 provisions of G.S. 143-128.1C shall not apply to this section.

10 **"§ 115C-532.1. Additional provisions applicable to build-to-suit capital leases.**

11 (a) Definitions. – The definitions of G.S. 115C-531.1 apply in this section. In addition, for  
12 the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

13 (1) Build-to-suit capital lease. – A capital lease that provides for the construction of  
14 new facilities or the renovation of existing facilities by the private developer,  
15 the cost of which is estimated to be greater than three hundred thousand dollars  
16 (\$300,000).

17 (2) Prime contractor. – A contractor who contracts directly with the private  
18 developer or the private developer's construction manager at risk, if any, for  
19 construction, repair, or renovation work under this section.

20 (b) Applicability of Provisions of G.S. 115C-531.1. – All of the provisions of  
21 G.S. 115C-531.1 apply in this section.

22 (c) Contract Provisions. – A build-to-suit capital lease may include contractual provisions  
23 by the private developer regarding the provision of products, services, and guaranties related to a  
24 facility that is the subject of a capital lease. A local board of education may also enter into a  
25 separate agreement or series of related agreements regarding the provision of products, services,  
26 and guaranties related to a facility that is the subject of a capital lease; provided all agreements are  
27 approved by the board of county commissioners in connection with the approval of the  
28 build-to-suit capital lease.

29 (d) Approval by Local Board of Education. – Before entering into a build-to-suit capital  
30 lease pursuant to this section, the local board of education shall adopt a resolution as provided in  
31 this subsection. Before adopting the resolution required by this subsection, the local board of  
32 education shall publish a notice of its intent to enter into a build-to-suit capital lease at least 10  
33 days in advance of the date of the meeting at which the action is contemplated and in a newspaper  
34 having general circulation within the geographic area served by the local board of education. The  
35 notice shall include, at a minimum, the date, time, and place of the meeting, a description in brief  
36 and general terms of the subject of the lease, the name of the other party to the lease, and an  
37 indication of the board's intent to take action to authorize the lease at the indicated meeting. The  
38 resolution shall provide the following:

39 (1) That entering into the build-to-suit capital lease for one or more specified  
40 buildings or facilities is in the unit's best interests under all the circumstances.  
41 In making this evaluation, the local board of education may consider the time,  
42 cost, and quality of design, engineering, and construction, including the time  
43 required to begin and the time required to complete a particular activity;  
44 occupancy costs, including lease payments, life-cycle maintenance, repair, and  
45 energy costs; and any other factors the board deems relevant.

46 (2) That the private developer is qualified to provide, either alone or in conjunction  
47 with other identified and associated persons, the products and services called  
48 for under the proposed capital lease and any related agreements. The local  
49 board of education shall make this determination, taking into account any  
50 factors the local board deems relevant, including the knowledge, skill, and  
51 reputation of the provider and its associated persons, the goals and plans of

1 providers for utilization of minority business enterprises, and the costs to be  
2 incurred by the local board of education.

3 (e) Submission to Board of County Commissioners. – The board shall submit the  
4 resolution to the board of county commissioners as provided in this subsection. The board of  
5 education shall forward its resolution to the board of county commissioners, together with any  
6 supporting documentation relied on by the board of education in making the findings in the  
7 resolution as the board of county commissioners may request. The board of county commissioners  
8 shall review the resolution and supporting documentation and no later than 45 days after receiving  
9 the resolution and the supporting documentation requested either affirm or reject the resolution of  
10 the board of education. If the board of county commissioners rejects the resolution, the board of  
11 education shall not enter into the lease.

12 (f) Additional Requirements Regarding Design Services. – All architectural, engineering,  
13 and survey services shall be procured in accordance with the provisions of Article 3D of Chapter  
14 143 of the General Statutes. Required design and engineering services shall be performed by an  
15 engineer or a licensed architect to the extent permitted under G.S. 83A-13(b). Specifications for  
16 any new school building shall be consistent with the requirements of G.S. 143-128(a). All  
17 applicable requirements for the review or approval of design and specifications for school  
18 buildings by the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Insurance apply to  
19 school buildings constructed, repaired, or renovated under a capital lease authorized under this  
20 section.

21 (g) Additional Requirements Regarding Construction Services. – A private developer is  
22 required to seek competition and minority business participation in connection with all  
23 construction work under this section in accordance with the following provisions:

24 (1) A private developer shall either (i) solicit bids from prime contractors for all  
25 construction work under this section or (ii) select a construction manager at risk  
26 through a qualification-based process in which case the selected construction  
27 manager at risk shall solicit bids from all of its prime contractors for all  
28 construction work under this section.

29 (2) The private developer or its construction manager at risk may prequalify  
30 contractors. The prequalification criteria, if any, shall be determined by the  
31 local board of education and the private developer to address quality,  
32 performance, the time specified in the bids for performance of the contract, the  
33 cost of construction oversight, time for completion, capacity to perform, and  
34 other factors deemed appropriate by the private developer and the local board of  
35 education.

36 (3) A private developer and its construction manager at risk, if any, shall comply  
37 with the requirements applicable to a public entity pursuant to G.S. 143-128.2,  
38 and prime contractors shall comply with the provisions of G.S. 143-128.2  
39 applicable to contractors, except the private developer and its construction  
40 manager shall adopt the local board of education's minority participation goal.  
41 The local board of education shall require the private developer to submit its  
42 plan for compliance with G.S. 143-128.2 for approval by the local board of  
43 education prior to the private developer soliciting bids under this subsection.

44 (4) A private developer or its construction manager at risk shall publicly advertise  
45 at least 30 days in advance of the bid date in a newspaper having general  
46 circulation within the geographic areas served by the local board of education,  
47 shall open bids publicly, and shall award each contract to the lowest  
48 responsible, responsive, and prequalified bidder, taking into consideration  
49 quality, performance, the time specified in the bids for performance of the  
50 contract, the cost of construction oversight, time for completion, compliance  
51 with G.S. 143-128.2, and any other factors deemed appropriate by the private

1 developer and the local board of education and included in the bid solicitation.  
2 A private developer or its construction manager at risk shall enter into the  
3 construction contracts directly with the successful bidder. After the award of a  
4 contract or contracts, the private developer or its construction manager at risk  
5 and any contractor may negotiate and reach agreement with the successful  
6 bidder on modifications to all aspects of the contract, including the time for  
7 performance, the scope of the work, and the price to be paid.

8 (5) The local board of education, in its discretion, may require the private  
9 developer to provide a performance and payment bond for construction work in  
10 accordance with the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 44A of the General  
11 Statutes and may require the private developer to provide a bond or other  
12 appropriate guarantee to cover any other guarantees, products, or services to be  
13 provided by the private developer.

14 (h) Predevelopment Agreements with Private Developer Authorized. – Local boards of  
15 education may enter into predevelopment agreements with a private developer in advance of  
16 entering into a build-to-suit capital lease. Predevelopment agreements with private developers  
17 shall be approved by the board of county commissioners. Predevelopment agreements may include  
18 provisions for each of the following:

19 (1) Site selection, land acquisition, and site preparation, including such services as  
20 wetlands delineation, archaeological review, and State and local government  
21 land-use permitting.

22 (2) Building programming and design, including both architectural and engineering  
23 services pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

24 (i) Real Estate Transfer Authorized. – Notwithstanding any contrary provisions of law, a  
25 city, county, or local board of education may, pursuant to the procedures in G.S. 160A-267, sell,  
26 lease, or otherwise transfer real or personal property to any private developer for construction,  
27 repair, or renovation of a school facility under a build-to-suit capital lease entered into pursuant to  
28 this section. The conveying unit may subject the property to any covenants, conditions, or  
29 restrictions as the unit deems to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. The  
30 disposition of property pursuant to this subsection is not subject to the requirements of  
31 G.S. 115C-518. No transfer by a local board of education under this subsection shall occur unless  
32 it is approved by the board of county commissioners.

33 (j) Additional Permitted Lease Terms. – In recognition of the potential economic and  
34 technical utility of build-to-suit capital leases, which include in their scope combinations of  
35 design, construction, operation, management, and maintenance responsibilities over prolonged  
36 periods of time, and the potential desirability of a single point of responsibility for these matters in  
37 connection with build-to-suit capital leases, any build-to-suit capital lease may include provisions  
38 imposing responsibility on the private developer or any identified affiliated entity for any of the  
39 following matters:

40 (1) Site selection, land acquisition, and site preparation, including wetlands  
41 delineation, archaeological review, and State and local government land-use  
42 permitting.

43 (2) Facility programming, planning, and design, including both architectural and  
44 engineering services.

45 (3) Qualification and prequalification of contractors and subcontractors.

46 (4) Construction and construction management.

47 (5) Financing.

48 (6) Facility maintenance and repairs.

49 (7) Energy usage guarantees.

50 (8) Transfer of ownership of the leased property to a local government entity at the  
51 end of the lease term.

1           (9) Any other guaranties, products, and services as the local board of education  
2           may determine.

3           (k) Letter of Credit. – A private developer shall provide an irrevocable letter of credit for  
4 the benefit of laborers and materialmen in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total  
5 cost of the improvements which are the subject of the build-to-suit capital lease and shall maintain  
6 the letter of credit throughout the construction of the project and for the succeeding six-month  
7 period.

8           (l) Public-Private Partnership Construction Contract Law Not Applicable. – The  
9 provisions of G.S. 143-128.1C shall not apply to this section."

10           **SECTION 3.** G.S. 143-129(e) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

11           "(e) Exceptions. – The requirements of this Article do not apply to:

12           ...

13           (13) Build-to-suit capital leases with a private developer under G.S. 115C-532.1."

14           **SECTION 4.** G.S. 115C-426(f) reads as rewritten:

15           "(f) The capital outlay fund shall include appropriations for:

16           (1) The acquisition of real property for school purposes, including but not limited  
17           to school sites, playgrounds, athletic fields, administrative headquarters, and  
18           garages.

19           (2) The acquisition, construction, reconstruction, enlargement, renovation, or  
20           replacement of buildings and other structures, including but not limited to  
21           buildings for classrooms and laboratories, physical and vocational educational  
22           purposes, libraries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, administrative offices, storage,  
23           and vehicle maintenance.

24           (3) The acquisition or replacement of furniture and furnishings, instructional  
25           apparatus, data-processing equipment, business machines, and similar items of  
26           furnishings and equipment.

27           (4) The acquisition of school buses as additions to the fleet.

28           (5) The acquisition of activity buses and other motor vehicles.

29           (5a) Lease payments for leases entered into under G.S. 115C-530, 115C-531.1, or  
30           115C-532.1.

31           (6) Such other objects of expenditure as may be assigned to the capital outlay fund  
32           by the uniform budget format.

33           The cost of acquiring or constructing a new building, or reconstructing, enlarging, or renovating  
34           an existing building, shall include the cost of all real property and interests in real property, and all  
35           plants, works, appurtenances, structures, facilities, furnishings, machinery, and equipment  
36           necessary or useful in connection therewith; financing charges; the cost of plans, specifications,  
37           studies, reports, and surveys; legal expenses; and all other costs necessary or incidental to the  
38           construction, reconstruction, enlargement, or renovation.

39           No contract for the purchase of a site shall be executed nor any funds expended therefor  
40           without the approval of the board of county commissioners as to the amount to be spent for the  
41           site; and in case of a disagreement between a board of education and a board of county  
42           commissioners as to the amount to be spent for the site, the procedure provided in G.S. 115C-431  
43           shall, insofar as the same may be applicable, be used to settle the disagreement.

44           Appropriations in the capital outlay fund shall be funded by revenues made available for  
45           capital outlay purposes by the State Board of Education and the board of county commissioners,  
46           supplemental taxes levied by or on behalf of the local school administrative unit pursuant to a  
47           local act or G.S. 115C-501 to 115C-511, the proceeds of the sale of capital assets, the proceeds of  
48           claims against fire and casualty insurance policies, and other sources."

49           **SECTION 4.5.** If House Bill 242, 2015 Regular Session, becomes law, then Section 2  
50           of that act reads as rewritten:

51           "**SECTION 2.** Section 6.5 of S.L. 2014-101 reads as rewritten:

1       **"SECTION 6.5.** Upon recommendations by the Office of Charter Schools and the Charter  
2 Schools Advisory Board, the State Board of Education shall adopt a process and rules for  
3 fast-track replication of high-quality charter schools currently operating in the State. The State  
4 Board of Education shall not require a planning year for applicants selected through the fast-track  
5 replication process. In addition to the requirements for charter applicants set forth in Part 6A of  
6 Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, the fast-track replication process adopted by  
7 the State Board of Education shall, at a minimum, require a board of directors of a charter school  
8 to demonstrate one of the following in order to qualify for fast-track replication:

9           (1) A charter school in this State governed by the board of directors has student  
10 academic outcomes that are comparable to the academic outcomes of students  
11 in the local school administrative unit in which the charter school is located and  
12 can provide three years of financially sound audits.

13           (2) The board of directors agrees to contract with an education management  
14 organization or charter management organization that can demonstrate that it  
15 can replicate high-quality charter schools in the State that have proven student  
16 academic success and financial soundness.

17 The State Board of Education shall ensure that the rules for a fast-track replication process provide  
18 that decisions by the State Board of Education on whether to grant a charter through the  
19 replication process are completed in less than 120 days from the application submission date but in  
20 no event later than October 15 of the year immediately preceding the year of the proposed school  
21 opening. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and procedures required by this section  
22 within 90 days of the effective date of this act, and report to the Joint Legislative Education  
23 Oversight Committee within 120 days of the effective date of this act.""

24           **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2016, and applies to contracts entered  
25 into on or after that date.