

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1989 SESSION

CHAPTER 796
HOUSE BILL 73

AN ACT TO REVISE THE PERFORMANCE PAY SYSTEM IN EFFECT FOR STATE EMPLOYEES SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 126 OF THE GENERAL STATUTES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 126-7 reads as rewritten:

~~"§ 126.7. It shall be considered a part of the personnel policy of this State that salary increases as provided in the compensation plan shall be granted in accordance with a standard of efficiency as established by the State Personnel Commission. Each employee whose salary is at or below the third step of the salary range established for the class to which the position is assigned shall be granted a salary increase in an amount corresponding to the increments between steps of the applicable salary range at least once each year if the individual's performance merits the increase. Prior to July 1 of each biennium, each agency, board, commission, department, or institution of State government subject to the provisions of this Article shall file with the State Personnel Director a written description of the plan or method it is currently following in awarding or allocating efficiency or merit salary increments. At the same time, each such agency, board, commission, department, or institution shall cause a copy thereof to be distributed to each employee. The State Personnel Director, with the approval of the State Personnel Commission, shall modify, alter or disapprove any such plan submitted to him which he deems not to be in accordance with the provisions of this Article. Within the limit of available funds, each employee meeting higher standards may be granted increases up to but not exceeding the maximum of the salary range established for the class to which his position is assigned. If, in addition to the salary ranges, the State Personnel Commission shall establish uniform provisions for a system of payments over and above the standard salary ranges on the basis of longevity in service, that plan of payments shall not be considered in applying this policy governing annual salary increments. The head of each department, bureau, agency, or commission, when making his budget request for the ensuing biennium, shall anticipate the funds which will be required during the biennium for the purpose of paying salary increments and shall include those amounts in his budget request. In no case shall the amount estimated for annual increments above the third step of the range exceed two thirds of the sum which would be required to grant increments to all the personnel of the agency then receiving or who will receive a salary equal to or above the third step of the salary range. With the approval of the State Personnel Commission, State departments,~~

bureaus, agencies, or commissions with 25 or less employees subject to the provisions of this Chapter may exceed the two-thirds restrictions herein provided.

§ 126-7. Compensation of State employees.

(a) It is the policy of the State to compensate its employees at a level sufficient to encourage excellence of performance and to maintain the labor market competitiveness necessary to recruit and retain a competent work force. To this end, salary increases to State employees shall be based, in part, on each individual employee's job performance and, in part, on general increases given to all State employees.

(b) To guide the Governor and the General Assembly in making appropriations to further the compensation policy of the State, the State Personnel Commission shall conduct annual compensation surveys. The Commission shall determine the percent of funds appropriated for salary increases to be reserved for a general increase for all State employees and the percent to be reserved for performance-based increases for eligible employees. The Commission shall present its recommendation on the percentages and the results of the compensation survey to the Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate no later than two weeks after the convening of the legislature in odd years and May 1st of even years. The amount reserved for performance increases shall not be less than twenty-five percent (25%) nor more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the total allocation.

(c) Performance increases shall be based on performance appraisals of all employees conducted by each department, agency, and institution. The State Personnel Commission, under the authority of G.S.126-4(8), shall adopt policy and regulations for performance appraisal. The policy and regulations shall include the following:

- (1) The performance appraisal system of each department, agency, or institution shall be designed and administered to ensure that performance increases are distributed fairly and reward only performance that exceeds performance requirements.
- (2) To be eligible to distribute its share of the performance increase allocation, a department, agency, or institution shall have an operative performance appraisal system which has been approved by the State Personnel Director. The performance appraisal system adopted shall use a rating scale of at least five levels, with the top three levels qualifying for performance increases, and shall adhere to modern personnel management techniques and practices in common use in the public and private sectors. Departments, agencies, and institutions with existing performance appraisal systems which use a rating scale which is not consistent with the five-level system described above shall have until July 1, 1991, to bring their systems into compliance with this subsection.
- (3) The State Personnel Director shall help departments, agencies, and institutions to establish and administer their performance appraisal systems and shall provide initial and ongoing training in performance appraisal and performance system administration.

- (4) An employee whose performance exceeds performance requirements shall receive a performance increase unless the employee's supervisor justifies in writing the decision not to award the performance increase. An employee whose performance does not exceed performance requirements shall not receive a performance increase.
- (5) The State Personnel Director shall set the performance increase ranges allowable for levels of performance that exceed performance requirements. Absent the supervisor's written justification, an employee whose performance exceeds expectations shall receive a percentage increase equal to the midrange value for his rating level. With the supervisor's written justification, an individual employee's increase may vary above or below the midrange value within the allowable range. A supervisor's performance appraisal plan, evaluation standards for each employee, and individual employee ratings and recommended performance increase amounts, with justification, shall be reviewed and approved by that supervisor's next higher level supervisor.
- (6) The State Personnel Director may suspend any performance increase that does not appear to meet the intent of the provisions of the performance pay system and require the originating department, agency, or institution to reconsider or justify the increase.
- (7) An employee who disputes the fairness of his performance evaluation or the sufficiency of the increase awarded or who believes that he was unfairly denied a performance increase shall first discuss the problem with his supervisor. Appeals of the supervisor's decision shall be made only to the grievance committee or internal performance review board of the department, agency, or institution which shall make a recommendation to the head of the department, agency, or institution for final decision. The State Personnel Director shall help a department, agency, or institution establish an internal performance review board or, if it includes employee members, to use its existing grievance committee to hear performance pay disputes. Notwithstanding G.S. 150B-2(2) and G.S. 126-22, 126-25, and 126-34, performance pay disputes, including disputes about individual performance appraisals, shall not be considered contested case issues.
- (8) The State Personnel Director shall monitor the performance appraisal system and performance increase distribution of each employing unit within each department, agency, and institution. Each department, agency, and institution shall submit to the Director annual reports which shall include data on the demographics of performance ratings, the frequency of evaluations, the performance pay increases awarded, and the implementation schedule for performance pay increases. The Director shall analyze the data to ensure that performance increases are distributed fairly within each department, agency, and institution and

across all departments, agencies, and institutions of State government and shall report back to each department, agency, and institution on its appraisal and distribution performance.

(9) The State Personnel Director shall report annually on the performance pay program to the Commission. The report shall evaluate the performance of each department, agency, and institution in the administration of its appraisal system and the distribution of performance increases within each department, agency, and institution and across State government. The report shall include recommendations for improving the performance appraisal system and alleviating inequities. Copies of the report shall be sent to the State Auditor.

(10) The Commission shall report annually to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Standing Personnel Committees of the House and the Senate. The Commission report shall include an evaluation of the administration of the appraisal system and distribution of performance increases by each department, agency, and institution. The State Personnel Director shall recommend to the General Assembly for its approval sanctions to be levied against departments, agencies, and institutions that have deficient appraisal systems or that do not link performance increases to performance. These sanctions may include withholding performance increases from the managers and supervisors of individual employing units of departments, agencies, and institutions in which discrepancies exist.

(d) The provisions of subsections (a), (b), and (c) shall not affect the system of longevity payments established by the State Personnel Commission.

(e) Nothing in this section shall require or authorize any department, agency, or institution to establish a limitation on the number or percentage of employees who are eligible under this section to receive performance increases."

Sec. 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1989.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 12th day of August, 1989.