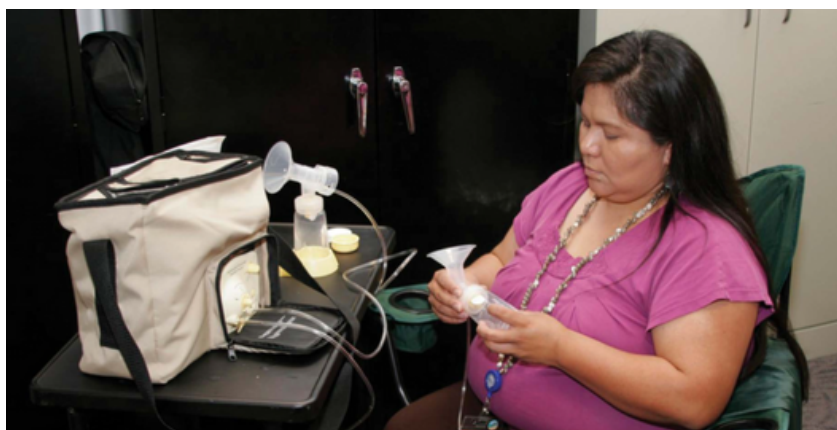


Proposal for Lactation Accommodations in North Carolina Public Schools



Submitted to: North Carolina Department of Education Board
Prepared by: North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition

Executive Summary

Despite legal protections, **North Carolina public school teachers, staff, students, and authorized visitors** continue to face **barriers to breastfeeding and pumping** due to **insufficient break times, lack of designated lactation spaces, and workplace stigma**.

This proposal calls for a **statewide Lactation Accommodation Policy** that builds upon the **existing successes of five Breastfeeding-Friendly Community Partner local school districts**:

- Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, Orange County Schools, Richmond County Schools, Public Schools of Robeson County, and Montgomery County Schools

Additionally, **Durham County Public Schools** has issued a **proclamation in support of lactating teachers and students**, further demonstrating the need for **statewide policy expansion**.

Key Policy Recommendations:

- Protected lactation breaks during the school day for teachers, staff, and students
 - A reasonable length (15-30 minutes every 3-4 hours) as a guideline for lactating individuals
- Accessible sanitary lactation spaces that are secure and reserved for lactating in every public school
- Protection from discrimination and job retaliation
- Compliance and enforcement measures for statewide accountability

By adopting this policy, the **North Carolina Department of Education** can ensure that **every public school provides safe, equitable lactation accommodations** that align with **federal law, state best practices, and proven local models**.



THE PROBLEM:

Teachers & Students Struggling to Pump in Schools

First-Hand Accounts from North Carolina Educators

Despite their dedication to education, many North Carolina teachers and students are forced to pump in unsanitary, unsafe, and inconvenient conditions.

Tiffany's Story – "I had **no private space** to pump, so I ended up **sitting on the bathroom floor** with my pump plugged into an outlet by the sink."



Another North Carolina Teacher's Story – "By mid-day, my boobs were so full that I just began **leaking everywhere**. I'm here teaching these babies basic life skills, and I don't even have the time to provide my own baby with food for **survival**."

Love Anderson's Story – "With my first baby, I was given **no time to pump** during End of Course testing, and my body started to physically break down. By the end of the statement mandated extended testing period, **I leaked** through my shirt and my jacket and my shoes were **soaked in milk**. I **developed mastitis** because I couldn't pump when I needed to. I knew I wanted to have more kids. Eventually, **I left the teaching profession**. It was **a choice** between the **well being of my children** and **my profession**, I choose **family**."



One North Carolina teacher said – “On top of being **physically uncomfortable** to even **painful**, it was very **emotionally challenging** as well.

I was still expected to show up for duties before and after school, stay late to take tickets for sporting events. It became an entire day of **scrambling to pump** whenever I possibly could. There were times where my **pumping sessions were interrupted** due to a student needing to get their belongings from my classroom (I had to pump in my classroom with the door locked because there was **nowhere else to go**).

Ultimately, **I ended up stopping** around 6 months (as opposed to my goal of 1 year) because I just couldn't continue experiencing all that anymore.”

“I have a friend who had a **custodian walk in on her pumping**, *even though* her door was locked and she had a sign up saying to come back later.”

WHY NORTH CAROLINA MUST ACT NOW

Existing Models of Success: The Five Breastfeeding-Friendly School Districts



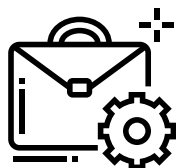
TRAINED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND HR PERSONNEL ON COMPLIANCE.



ESTABLISHED CLEAR POLICIES ENSURING TEACHERS AND STAFF GET PROTECTED LACTATION BREAKS.



CREATED PRIVATE LACTATION ROOMS IN MULTIPLE SCHOOL BUILDINGS.



DURHAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' LEADERSHIP

In 2025, Durham County Public Schools issued a proclamation recognizing the **need for improved lactation accommodations**. This leadership **sets a precedent** for the rest of the state to follow. However, without **statewide enforcement**, many educators, staff, and students across **other districts remain unprotected**.



These actions have demonstrated **positive results**, such as improved teacher retention, higher job satisfaction, and increased teacher-student well-being. However, **without consistent statewide enforcement**, many educators and staff in other districts **continue to face challenges** and **remain unprotected**. To build on this success and create a more equitable environment, North Carolina **must act now** to implement uniform lactation policies across all districts.

The Solution: A Statewide Lactation Policy for North Carolina Public Schools

1. Protected Lactation Breaks

- Teachers, staff, and students must have protected pumping or breastfeeding breaks.
- Lactating teachers should be exempt from lunch duty and non-instructional supervision.
 - This will ensure lactating teachers will have dedicated time to pump without losing valuable work time
- Schools must provide flexible scheduling and/or substitute coverage for pumping teachers.

2. Dedicated Lactation Spaces

- Schools must have a designated, private space for lactation that is:
 - NOT a bathroom
 - Lockable with privacy signage
 - Equipped with seating, an electrical outlet, and a refrigerator
 - Close to work areas to reduce time lost

3. Protection from Retaliation & Discrimination

- Employees should not experience penalties for lactation needs.
- Schools must provide reasonable accommodations for lactating students.
- Compliance officers should ensure fair enforcement of policies.

4. Compliance & Accountability

- Each school district must designate a Lactation Compliance Officer.
- Schools must submit annual reports detailing their lactation policies and compliance.
- Non-compliance should lead to corrective actions and oversight.



LEGAL JUSTIFICATION & STRATEGIC PLAN

Federal & State Laws Protect Lactating Workers & Students

- **Break Time for Nursing Mothers Act** (FLSA, 2010) – Requires break time and private space for lactating employees.
- **Title IX of the Education Amendments** (Updated 2023) – Protects lactating students by requiring reasonable accommodations.
- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act** – Prohibits employment discrimination based on lactation.

Economic & Health Benefits of Implementing This Policy

- **Lower Teacher Turnover** – Schools with lactation policies retain teachers longer.
- **Healthier Students & Staff** – Breastfeeding reduces illness, absenteeism, and postpartum depression.
- **Legal & Financial Protection** – Prevents lawsuits, financial penalties, and public backlash.

Implementation Plan

Phase 1: Policy Development & Training

(3-6 Months)

- Finalize statewide lactation accommodation policy.
- Train school administrators, HR, and teachers.
- Assess lactation space needs in each school.

Phase 2: Statewide Rollout & Awareness

(6-12 Months)

- Require all school districts to adopt and implement the policy.
- Provide public awareness materials for teachers, staff, and students.
- Launch a statewide campaign.

Phase 3: Compliance Monitoring & Accountability (Ongoing)

- Conduct annual compliance audits.
- Provide a complaint resolution process for violations.
- Offer grants and funding to districts implementing lactation spaces.



Resources for Support

American Pregnancy Association

Doula Support for Labor & Delivery

<https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/labor-and-birth/having-a-doula/>

Baby Café

(Finding a Breastfeeding Support Group)

<https://www.babycafeusa.org>

Black Mothers Breastfeeding Association

<http://blackmothersbreastfeeding.org>

Breastfeeding USA

<http://breastfeedingusa.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

CDC - Breastfeeding

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/>

CDC — Medication Use During Pregnancy

(‘Treating for Two’)

<https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/meds/treatingfortwo/index.html>

CDC — Milk Storage & Handling Guidelines

https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm

CDC — While Breastfeeding

(Special Circumstances)

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/index.html>

Donor Human Milk Information (HMBANA)

<https://hmbana.org>

International Lactation Consultant Association

<https://www.ilca.org>

(Use "Find a Lactation Consultant" on the bottom menu.)

Infant Feeding Guidelines

World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding>

LactMed: Drugs and Lactation Database

(LactMed®) – NCBI Bookshelf

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK501922/>

La Leche League International

<https://www.llli.org>

(Click on “Resources” tab.)

La Leche League USA

<https://www.llli.org>

(Use the location map to find local groups.)

Lamaze International

<https://www.lamaze.org>

Mochas Moms

<https://www.mochamoms.org>

National and State Breastfeeding Laws

(National Conference of State Legislatures)

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>

Nutrition Guidelines – MyPlate

(Pregnancy and Breastfeeding)

<https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>

Office on Women’s Health -

Breastfeeding Questions

(Office on Women’s Health)

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding>

Phone Helpline: 800-994-9662

(M–F 9 am–6 pm ET)

Office on Women’s Health -

It’s Only Natural

African American Breastfeeding Support

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/its-only-natural>

Postpartum Support — 4th Trimester Project

<https://newmomhealth.com>

Conclusion & Call to Action

North Carolina's teachers, staff, and students deserve safe and equitable lactation accommodations.

We urge the North Carolina Department of Education to:

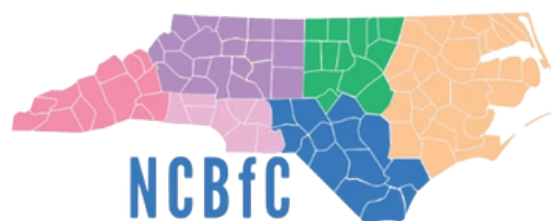
- **Adopt this policy statewide**
- **Ensure proper enforcement across all public schools**
- **Support funding for lactation spaces and teacher accommodations**

By adopting this policy, the North Carolina Department of Education has the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the health and well-being of its students and educators, leading the way for creating inclusive, supportive, and equitable schools

Respectfully submitted,

North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition

<https://www.ncbfc.org/>



Many thanks to: *Exposed: Discrimination Against Breastfeeding Workers*: Cover, Page 4, Page 7; Shutterstock.com: Page 5; VGstockstudio: Page 5; Breastfeed Durham: Cover, Page 3, Page 7



Source: Kris Haro and Johnathan Wenske, When Nurture Calls Campaign



For more information please visit,
<https://breastfeedingcommunities.org>
<https://www.ncbfc.org/>
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