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## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST NC APPLAUDS NORTH CAROLINA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS**

### **Teachers Excel, Despite Adverse Circumstances**

Raleigh, NC—May 7, 2013—Public Schools First NC salutes the 90,000 teachers and 2,200 teacher assistants—plus administrators and other staff—who toil a minimum of 1,025 instructional hours each school year educating nearly 1.5 million public school students. Among many educational achievements, North Carolina boasts 19,799 National Board Certified teachers, the largest number of any state in the nation.

In addition to topping the national certification chart, North Carolina educators have helped our students achieve:

- The highest four-year graduation rate in state history (80.4 percent)
- A career and technical education completers' graduation rate of 94 percent
- An early college high school graduation rate of 93.5 percent
- The lowest dropout rate in state history

“What is remarkable about our public school accomplishments is that they were achieved under the most adverse circumstances,” said Yevonne Brannon, Chair, Public Schools First NC. “We are currently operating under a budget that is 11 percent less than what was spent in 2007-08, while student enrollment has grown by approximately 16,000 students.” Brannon continued, “Since 2009, our public schools have lost 17,278 positions and laid off 6,167 people, including 35 percent teachers and another 33 percent teaching assistants. We have drastically reduced teacher development and mentoring programs, textbook funding, and we pay North Carolina teachers \$10,000 less than the national average. We are so grateful to our teachers for their passion for making a strong and lasting difference in the lives of children.”

Public Schools First NC is deeply concerned that budget cuts and other proposed legislation would impact educators' ability to help our children succeed.

- Loss of 3,000 teaching assistants in grades 2-3. These professionals play an essential role in helping children learn to read by grade 3, a critical education

- milestone.
- Threat to end teacher tenure. Teachers can already be dismissed if there is just cause; tenure protects teachers with four or more years of experience from arbitrary dismissal.
  - Untested pay-for-performance plans set up a scheme that encourages competition, whereas teachers thrive on cooperation and teamwork.
  - Drop in household income eligibility for access to pre-K programs. Pre-K programs aid early preparedness leading to greater student success in K-12.
  - The elimination of defined K-3 class size ratios, causing class size to go up just as it has in grades 4-12 since 2009. The Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the US Department of Education, cites “class size reduction as one of four K-12 reforms that have been proven to work through rigorous evidence.”

“Teacher effectiveness is widely recognized as key element of student success,” noted Adrienne Kelly Lumpkin, president of Alternate Access, a local technology business, and an active volunteer in Wake County schools. “Tenure—along with a nationally competitive salary—are components of an educational system that values its educators and regards them as true professionals. We need our legislators to focus on investing in competitive salaries, mentoring programs, professional development, and an effective work environment so we can attract and retain the best and brightest teachers in North Carolina.”

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**About Public Schools First NC:**

Public Schools First NC (PSFNC) is a group of citizens, parents, teachers, businesses and organizations joining together to advocate for a first-rate public education system for all North Carolinians. To learn more or to join our organization, please visit:

[publicschoolsfirstnc.org](http://publicschoolsfirstnc.org).