



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST NC FORMS**

### **New Statewide Group Champions Investment in Public Education**

Raleigh, NC—February 4, 2013—Public Schools First NC, a new statewide, non-partisan, grassroots advocacy group committed to high-quality public schools for North Carolina, has formed out of deep concern about the growing threat to privatize and weaken North Carolina’s public schools. Despite the fact that most North Carolinians regard public education as the foundation of North Carolina’s economic future and our best investment, public school funding has declined year after year and our children are bearing the brunt.

“We believe that North Carolina’s families deserve a public education system that is inclusive, innovative, responsive, and flexible—a system that operates within a framework of fairness, sound planning and local public accountability for tax dollars,” said Nick Rhodes, Public Schools First NC Board of Directors. “Adequate and equitable funding for all schools, effective teacher and principal recruitment, retention and support, and rich educational experiences will allow North Carolina to keep its rightful place as a state that leads the nation in excellent schools.”

Public Schools First NC supports:

- Adequate, equitable funding reflecting at least the national average for each of North Carolina’s 115 school districts.
- Increased funding for pre-school, because research demonstrates that high quality, early childhood education is a wise investment for communities and has lifelong, positive results for children.

- Excellent educational environments that are partnerships between schools, families, teachers and the community.
- Programs that encourage the retention of professional experienced teachers.
- A limited number of truly innovative charter schools designed to work with local school districts, managed with careful local and state oversight.
- A broad education—including literature, mathematics, the arts, history, civics, science, foreign languages, physical education, vocational education and new technological innovations—that allows students to thrive in a challenging, changing, and competitive global economy.

Public Schools First NC opposes:

- Vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts or other similar plans that take resources from our public schools—with little public oversight and even less evidence of success for students.
- Overuse and misuse of high stakes testing. Time and resources should be spent on hands on learning, creative problem solving, and a holistic curriculum. Test scores should not be used to punitively grade schools or evaluate teachers but as one of many tools that inform instruction.
- Educational “strategies” that ignore the impact of poverty on student success and blame teachers and schools. We will hold our elected officials accountable for addressing the growing rates of childhood poverty in North Carolina.

As our history shows, North Carolinians understand that education is the “great equalizer” for our citizens, and each child’s right to an excellent public education is guaranteed in our state constitution. Public Schools First NC will be a voice to remind us all that our public schools are our first and best investment for North Carolina’s future.

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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)