

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." - Benjamin Franklin

Every day, North Carolinians entrust the general wellbeing and education of **more than 1.5 million K-12 students** to **95,000+ teachers** and **20,600 teaching assistants**. For a **minimum of 1,025 instructional hours** each school year, teachers are hard at work helping each child succeed in school and in life.

North Carolina's reputation as an educational leader is well known, and the quality of our public schools has made our state attractive to new families and businesses.

A quality public school education depends on quality public school teachers; there's a mountain of research data pointing to the critical role our teachers play in student achievement.

According to the [Center for Public Education](#), "Having an effective teacher consistently rises to the top as the most important factor in learning—more so than student ethnicity or family income, school attended, or class size." Experience, advanced degrees, and subject-specific certification are among many teacher credentials that contribute to student achievement.

Challenges of Recruiting High Quality Teachers

NC currently ranks **46th** in the US in teacher salary. In the decade from 2001-2 to 2011-12 NC teachers witnessed a **15% average salary decline**. NC pays our teachers **\$10,000 less than than the national average**. In NC, the base salary for a teacher with a Bachelor's degree and less than five years-experience is \$30,800 versus teachers in Georgia who average \$7,000 more at the same level.

| | Average Salary |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| United States | \$56,103 |
| Georgia | \$52,880 |
| South Carolina | \$48,375 |
| Alabama | \$47,949 |
| North Carolina | \$45,737 |

Source: NEA Rankings and Estimates, 2013-2014.

- Teachers with five years experience earn \$35,380
- 14% of teachers earn the base teaching salary
- It takes 15 years for a teacher to earn \$40,000

Loss of Teaching Positions

As was the case in four of the past five years, the biennial budget passed during the 2013 legislative session provided **no salary increase** for teachers. Moreover, the budget **eliminated 9,306.5 education positions** — 5,184.5 teachers, 3,850 teacher assistants, and 272 support personnel (including guidance counselors, psychologists, and social workers). These cuts came at the same time that NC was experiencing growth in the student population. Additionally, over the prior four years, NC's public schools have **lost 17,278 positions** and **laid off 6,167 people** (35% teachers, 33% teaching assistants) and the number of public school students has grown by about 16,000.

The Excellent Public Schools Act of 2013:

- Eliminated career status for educators. (Teachers can already be dismissed if there is just cause; career status protected teachers with four or more years of experience from arbitrary dismissal.) Teachers will now be placed on one to four-year contracts. This is considered a due process policy, not a tenure policy.
- Gives schools a letter grade based on performance.
- Will pay teachers for performance—based primarily on student test scores.

In addition, the budget also eliminates salary increases for teachers who earn a master's or doctoral degree after 2014.

Public schools may be at a distinct disadvantage in some of the pay for performance issues since evaluation standards differ from those used for charter and private schools. For example, charter and private schools aren't assigned letter grades, nor are they subject to the same teaching certification standards and academic and financial oversight as our public schools.

Source: Please see our website for more research, citations and information on this topic.

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