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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NC SUPREME COURT DEALS STUNNING BLOW TO PUBLIC EDUCATION

More children placed at risk by decision

Raleigh, NC—July 23, 2015— Public Schools First NC is disheartened by the NC Supreme Court ruling that will transfer tens of millions of desperately needed public education dollars to fund unaccountable private schools.

“Today is a very sad day in the history of our state,” said Yevonne Brannon, Chair, Public Schools First NC. “Our long-standing tradition of commitment to excellence in public education has made North Carolina a jewel among southern states. We cannot fathom how this decision upholds the constitutional promise that all children receive a sound, basic education within the public school system. And we are deeply concerned as strong public schools are critical for growing our economy and maintaining the vitality of our communities.”

Where voucher programs have been implemented, there is no evidence that they offer high-quality educational alternatives to children from low-income families. In Indiana, the number of vouchers awarded has grown exponentially; according to an education leader in that state, the program “now benefits middle class families who always intended to send their children to private (mostly religious) schools and taxpayers are footing the growing bill.” Today, Indiana taxpayers pay an estimated \$116 million to send 29,000 students to private/religious schools.

Public Schools First NC questions the “public purpose” of the school voucher program, when there are clear solutions—ranging from fully-funding pre-K programs, adequately funding classroom supplies, and offering programs and compensation that encourage recruitment, preparation, support and retention of professional, experienced educators—to improve public education. Since 2008-09, funding for education essentials, including (textbooks, transportation, teacher assistants, teachers, etc.) has been reduced by over \$1 billion.

“How can sending at-risk children to schools where accreditation is not necessary, where teachers do not need a high school diploma, and where adherence to academic standards is not required be a worthy educational alternative,” noted Brannon. “All children lose when public schools are further depleted of their funds, and those funds are then used for unworthy ends.”

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About Public Schools First NC:

Public Schools First NC (PSFNC) is a statewide, nonpartisan organization focused solely on public education issues. We collaborate with teachers, parents, business and civic leaders, students and communities across North Carolina in support of an effective public education system that will prepare each child for life. To learn more or to join our organization, please visit: publicschoolsfirstnc.org. Follow us on Twitter: @PS1NC. [Read our 2015 legislative priorities.](#)